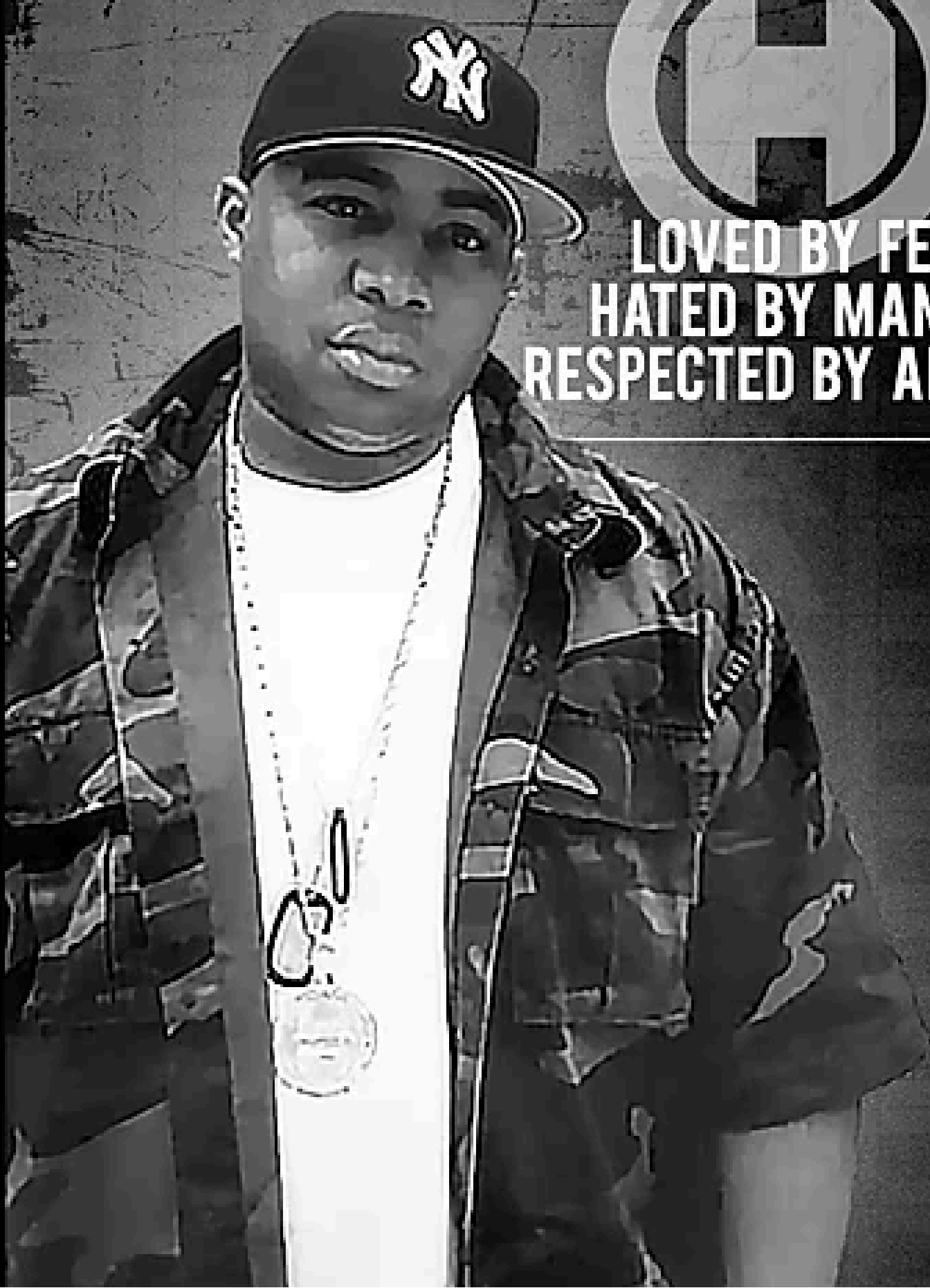

RENEGADE



LOVED BY FEW
HATED BY MANY
RESPECTED BY ALL



Renegade

by

Clayton Hines

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Clayton Hines

Disclaimer:

All opinions by the author expressed throughout this story are based
loosely around actual events.

Dedicated to the fallen soldiers of DnB:

RIP

Stormin

Kemistry

MC Kendo

Marcus Intalex

Spirit

Billy Denial

Chris Kosiba

Stevie Hyper D

DJ Trend

Sean Riggs

Paul Trouble Anderson

TC Izlam

Sarah Walters

Tenor Fly

Tango

Dominator

Rob Apex



**DRUM & BASS
AGAINST RACISM**

Dedicated to my son, Jerome.
Love you more than you know.

Contents

Contents	v
Foreword	
By Brad Lush a.k.a DJ Lush (Toronto)	xi
The Intro...	1
1 And the Winner is...	3
2 Keep it moving	7
3 God Bless America	11
4 Football Focus	15
5 Fitting In	19
6 Growing up	25
7 Back in the UK	29
8 Survival	33

9 West End	39
Lenny McClean	48
Peckham Dave	49
Bouncer Tales	50
Hippodrome	51
10 Acid Drama	55
Da early Covent Garden Years — '84-'88	56
Yoko	63
11 There's no Black in the Union Jack	67
12 Living the Music	79
Moondance	82
13 The Birth of DnB	87
Hardcore	87
Jungle Era	88
Techstep	94
Neuro	96
Pirate Radio	98
14 Creepers	101
Sims	104
15 Wrong'Un	107
Testimonial — Skitty	110

16 Summer of Love Era	113
17 Starting the Label	127
Renegade Recordings	133
Mark aka Griblos aka Mr Para	137
Pure Bliss	139
Testimonial — Damone aka Manifest	140
18 I'm Vegan Now	145
Friction	145
Goldie	153
Bukem	155
Bailey	157
Maztek	164
D&B Arena	166
Brockie	168
Tony Colman	170
Fierce	173
Script	179
Dillinja	182
Micky Finn	186
Fabric	188
Cabbie	194
19 Black Thursday	199
Dashing away a Demo	204

Testimonial — Dushi	206
20 The Second Wave	211
Future Cut	211
DJ Reality	212
Usual Suspects	212
Ink	217
Loxy	221
Chase & Status	222
Vicious Circle	224
Universal Project	227
21 Konflikt	229
Testimonial — Nick Dettmar	240
22 Music House	241
Coming Out of the Closet	246
Agents	248
Testimonial — DJ Chef	260
23 Events	267
Two Monthly Events	274
Breakin Science	276
Hardware MCs	287
The Final Chapter	289
Testimonial — Adi J	293

24 Metalheadz at Bluenote	297
Wax Club	303
Testimonial — DJ Kid	305
25 Depression	307
Cligga's Angels	321
Testimonial — DJ Silver / Northbase	323
26 Kane	325
27 Sex & Drugs & DnB	331
Sket	345
Testimonial — Gremlinz	347
28 Social Media	349
Testimonial — Dave AK1200	356
29 Rule 480	359
30 Rawkus	367
Testimonial — DJ Dara	373
The Outro	375
Glossary	377
Special Thanks and Contributions	379

Foreword

By Brad Lush a.k.a DJ Lush (Toronto)

Pages xi–xx

I first met Clayton in 1997 at the [Miami Music Conference](#). I can't pinpoint the exact way we met, but I remember I was there with my friend [DJ Slip](#), who at that time was just on the verge of blowing up as the first big producer from Toronto. This is right when his tune [Man Of Steel](#) had just got signed by [Micky Finn](#) for his label and the track was starting to gain a lot of legs on dubplate. We had somehow secured a set at some club in south beach that was going all day. Slip and I were going to play down there later that afternoon, and we were armed up with all the dubs coming out of the [Vinyl Syndicate](#) camp back home, which mainly consisted of Slips tunes.

Always on the hunt for tunes, Clayton said he was coming to check us.

Let's be honest here: The only people in a dark club at 4 p.m. in the afternoon when the sun is shining on South Beach, are hardcore

drug addicts. But true to his word, Clayton was there in the crowd taking in our set. Afterwards, we exchanged numbers, and he said he wanted to do a single with Slip for [Trouble on Vinyl](#).

There was one tune in particular I played called [Nail Gun](#) that he was into. In the end it never worked out and the tracks ended up coming on Vinyl Syndicate. I'm not sure why the deal fell through, but I suspect it probably had something to do with Clayton's long-standing feud with Micky Finn, who, as mentioned before, had signed Slip and [Vinyl Syndicate](#). But I never really asked why as it was none of my business.

Now that I had Clayton's office number, I was on the case calling him every couple weeks trying to get promos and dubs. I went to London for the first time in November 1998, a couple weeks before the "Armageddon" album was dropping on Hardware. I was involved in some half-baked scheme with a guy called [Outrage](#) (who is now known as [Nomine](#)) to set up a promo list for North American DJs to get promos, similar to a company providing the same service in London at the time called [Main Source](#). I went to the TOV studios on Wandsworth Road to have a meeting with Clayton about getting his labels on board. Thinking back now, it was all just an excuse to meet some of the key people at my favourite labels and get promos and dubs from them. That was literally the single most important thing in my life at that time.

I left with promos of the album and a few other forthcoming TOV and Renegade bits. You could tell that Clayton respected that, I came

all the way to London and was going around to all the labels and to [Music House](#) on my own. This was when we started talking weekly on the phone and he began to send me music.

Shortly after that, I started sending him tunes that me. my production partner and friend [Natural](#) had made and by 2001 Clayton signed one of [our tunes](#) that we made with our other friend, [Jesta](#) (who now works closely with [Gremlinz](#)), to TOV. At this point we would go to London every six months or so and Clayton would insist that we stay at his flat. He used to give us keys to his place, and a burner pay-as-you-go cell phone so that we could call people. He would just do his thing and we could come and go as we pleased. Clayton would call promoters and get us put on the guest list for all the weekly events like Swerve, Bar Rumba and Metalheadz and he would call producers like [Total Science](#) and [Marcus Intalex](#), tell them about “His boy from Canada,” and get them to let me cut tunes at Music House

He would even go down to Music House when I was back home, cut a bunch of dubs for me, grab a bunch of vinyl off my want list of promos from [SRD](#) and then have a package sent to me in Toronto. Sometimes he would get one of the various DJ’s that would come to play in Toronto every week back then to carry the package with them and give it to me here.

During this period he came to Toronto to visit, so we took him around to all the record stores, to a massive rave at the Better Living Centre and I took him to Ottawa with me for some big rave I was

playing there with Natural and Slip.

I introduced him to my friend Ruckus who was the guy behind Empire, one of the large rave companies back then. Clayton saw first-hand how massive the scene was in Toronto at that time with his own eyes and was immediately talking about wanting to throw parties here. After a few meetings between Clayton, Mark and Ruckus, his partner Tones and Amber, who ran a big rave culture related shop called Numb, struck a deal and the Soundclash brand was born. TOV, Empire and Numb threw three massive Soundclash events that featured some exciting line-ups, including Toronto debuts for [Future Cut](#), [Usual Suspects](#) and [Digital](#), as well as the first time [Skibba](#), [Shabba](#) and [Fearless](#) shared the same stage in Toronto. Clayton also managed to secure a rare DJ set from [Dillinja](#) at a big rave back when he was not DJing at all.¹

Clayton's favourite spot in Toronto was the infamous *Brass Rail* strip club. We took him there for the first time, and his eyes lit up like a kid in *Toys "R" Us*. I remember being in there for hours with him. Me personally I'm not a strip club guy plus I don't drink, so there are only so many ten-dollar cokes I can order before I've had enough. So, I started just dropping him off there and then picking him up hours later.

He met a gorgeous Spanish girl in there that we called "The Costa Rican Ting" and I was convinced Clayton was going to sponsor her to move to London so he could wife her.

¹[Dillinja & MC GQ - Live @ Sound Clash 3 Toronto - 02.09.2002](#)

Don't get me wrong: Clayton is not a pussyhole. He knew not to trust a stripper and he wouldn't get taken advantage of ever, but he gets so dead-set enamoured on a girl and all his focus goes towards her until he beds her, then he is like the happiest guy in the world.

We used to say to him, "How much money you spend on her in there?"

At that time, the UK Pound was like two and a half to one Canadian dollar. So, for Clayton a lap dance was probably less than ten quid. He would say, "[Brad](#), it's a minor. I'm just putting in my investment on this ting for later."

He was legitimately having a great time in that place so what could I say? For years afterwards he would say, "I gotta come to Toronto to come check on that Costa Rican ting." I think he even saw her and picked up where he left off with her in Miami.

Brass Rail was definitely his favourite thing about Toronto, but what he hated was the cold. Every time he came here it was the dead of winter and we had some vicious winters back then. We walked out of a rave on the CNE grounds early one morning and Clayton had his huge fur hooded goose on with timberlands and a toque, and the wind hit us when we were walking to the car. Clayton was pissed! He was trying to walk backwards to stay out of the wind screaming at me like, "Nah, nah, nah Brad. How do you even live here in this? This is a madness! I can't come here in the winter any more this is a liberty!"

One thing that has always been a constant throughout my years

of friendship with Clayton has been other people's reactions to him, "Oh, you are working with Clayton? Be careful he is gangster, he is a street guy, make sure you get paid."

The subtext to what a lot of these people were saying to me was really a case of "Clayton is a big scary black guy, and he can't be controlled."

One thing I learned from being around Clayton so much is, that you get back the energy that you give him. I always tell people, who question my relationship with him, that if you act like a pussyhole with Clayton, then he is going to treat you like one.

I have seen that reaction played out time and time again over the years, usually by entitled little producers who have made a couple tunes and then their heads blew up. Or they had someone talking in their ear gassing them up. And when they disrespectfully came at Clayton he would immediately switch on them. For most that is a reaction that a lot of people do not expect to happen, or don't know how to handle.

When you are used to everybody treating you one way and then someone like Clayton is not having it, people get their fragile egos bruised. The only recourse they have is to talk shit about the man, either online or amongst people in the scene, rather than when they see him face-to-face. "Keeping that same energy," as is the current saying.

I think that one of the predominant takeaways that one must have when looking at the story behind Clayton is, that he is one of the last

few holdouts from the “old guard”. Clayton is older than me. Me, being a late seventies baby, i can see that there are still generational differences between people from his era and people born from, let’s say the late eighties, early nineties and beyond. That people from my age bracket can exist in the middle of these generations and understand why Clayton is the way that he is. While those who are younger than me, who make up the bulk of the current Drum & Bass scene, might not get him.

It is important to recognize that working-class inner city London in the late eighties and early nineties, which Clayton is a by-product of, was the incubation point for jungle music to manifest. The reason for that was because working-class, inner-city London was possibly the only place on earth at that time that was uniquely and truly multicultural. This created an environment for lower-class white, black and brown to mix and meld cultures and influence each other. That cross-cultural pollination was crucial for the development of Jungle in its formative days.

In so much of current day politics and social commentary, race is almost always the elephant in the room. So while Jungle was the first music to truly incorporate a melting pot under one roof, it cannot be argued or understated that it’s musical and cultural *DNA* is firmly rooted in Black music (dub, reggae, techno, hip-hop and funk).²

When you look at the “face” of Drum & Bass in 2019, and even more so during the last fifteen odd years, those faces became less and

²There are several books on the topic: See [Black Music Library](#)

less diverse and moved further and further away from that original jungle demographic.

Let us not mince words here: the audience became whiter, more middle-class student based and even more male-dominated. The music changed to reflect that as well, and for many that change represented a negative direction for the music.

This makes the role of “O.G.” characters of colour in Drum & Bass even more critical. Clayton and his long-term business partner Mark Hill represented the last in a long line of black-run labels in Jungle and Drum & Bass. Preceded by [Reinforced Records](#), whom Clayton has always cited as one of his major inspirations, as well as figures like [Goldie](#) at [Metalheadz](#), [Paul Ibiza](#), [Shut Up & Dance](#), [Rebel MC](#), and of course the various black DJ run labels from the likes of [Grooverider](#), [Fabio](#), [Randall](#), [Brockie](#), [Ray Keith](#), [Shy FX](#), [Ron](#), [Bukem](#), and of course probably Hardware and TOV’s most prominent and active contemporary to this day, [Bryan Gee](#) and [Frost](#) at [V Recordings](#).

Hopefully, the story told in this book helps to illustrate Clayton’s unique position within the history of the genre and further sheds some light on the tough upbringing and the obstacles he had to overcome to bring him to his success. Perhaps knowing that struggle would explain to those why he would fight and push back so hard when people would try to take advantage of him on a business or a personal level. For some, he might always be labelled as someone who is hard to deal with, but if you recognize that to survive the life that he has lead you have to be a fighter, then maybe his persona is

easier to understand.

As I said, people have always questioned my relationship with Clayton and tried to discredit his character to me or insinuate that he is not to be trusted. For me, it is usually the bringer of those questions and their low-key actions whose integrity I have to ponder.

If there is one thing that I can say without any doubt, is that Clayton ALWAYS paid us, and we never even had to ask. We would get advances and royalty statements for our releases, we would get publishing, we would always get a wage for playing his parties. And to be honest... we were nobodies. That's the thing: Clayton went above and beyond for Natural and me, time and time again, and usually it was at his insistence or invitation. He would go out of his way to book us for big parties he was doing and would defend us to people who would question why we were there. Natural used to have a key to his flat and would stay there for weeks at a time when he was touring in Europe. Sometimes Clayton wasn't even in the country when he was staying there.

In all the years that every major DnB artist or DJ would come to Toronto, we would drop everything and we were doing in our lives to go and take them out to eat or drive them around, the number of those same guys who would even put me on a guest list or let me get a test press when I would come to London I can literally count on one hand.

Clayton has always been there for me and treated me like family, and if I'm honest the amount of boost that my own DJ career got as a

result of his constant support, I couldn't actually repay him for on equal terms. The guy might be intimidating to some, but the reality is he is one of the kindest, selfless and most importantly REALEST guys in all of drum and bass. And that is a priceless quality especially in this day and age.

The Intro...

Pages 1–2

“Watch out for Clayton, he’s gangster...”

“Make sure you get paid in advance, he’s a shady businessman...”

“Did you hear the beef between Clayton and Friction...?”

“What’s his problem with Bailey? Why haven’t spoken in over twenty years...”

“He stole [Messiah](#)... at gunpoint...!”

If you are a fan of Drum & Bass music, you might have heard my name before. If not, please allow me to introduce myself: My name’s Clayton and I’ve lived a bit of a life.

Since childhood, I have had to hustle from square one. Survival was the way of life. From struggling and being homeless on the streets, I went on to build some of the most iconic brands within the global Drum & Bass music scene... and a bit of an infamous reputation to go with them. But why? Where did these rumours come from? How did I earn a name that has caused so much commotion?

This is my story, a no-holds-barred look at my life. From a young kid with football dreams growing up in the racial American south to a youth of crime living on the streets of London to changing my path and pursuing a life building a musical empire from the ground up. I had to fight my way to the top. Speaking of fighting: what's the deal with those epic beefs? Funny story that...

Contrary to popular belief, I look after my friends. If I trust you, then we are family and we'll hustle together. Unfortunately, the music scene breeds a lot of egos and I have never been a yes-man. For the first time, you will hear it all, straight from the horse's mouth. From inflated egos and mass exodus to friendship betrayal and rebuilding the brand, you will know the truth behind the rumors that grew and took on a life of their own.

To better understand, let's take it back to a pivotal moment...

Chapter 1

And the Winner is...

Pages 3–6

My heart is beating fast and I'm sweating. Am I about to get robbed again? This is 2003 and sitting around the table are Mark (my partner in crime), Yoko, Amy (my current girlfriend at the time), [Eddie Otchere](#), [Chris Renegade](#), [Ink](#), [Loxy](#), [Manifest](#) and me. We are at the [Knowledge Magazine](#) Awards and this time, it has to be our time.

When I got into the music business, I had two things I wanted to accomplish: I wanted recognition from my peers and I wanted to create a brand that the public would buy on sight. I wanted to be the next generation [Sleeping Bag Records](#) or [Reinforced](#). Imprints that had been crucial in my musical education. So here we were, nominated for Best Event and Best Label.

I had a Hardware iced-out pendant, watch, and earrings, that I'd picked up on one of my many trips to New York for the occasion. It

was time for our hard work to pay off. But then again, I'd thought that the year before.

After “Black Thursday” when all our artists left after a contract dispute — and trust me, I will be going into that in more detail — we had done well to regroup. I had been out on the road twenty-four-seven trying to bring in new artists and tunes to the label. We would make two huge signings, [Usual Suspects](#) and [Future Cut](#).

Usual Suspects were a trio and the first act we signed after “Black Thursday”. They delivered one of the biggest drum and bass anthems of the year, [Killa Bees](#). Future Cut created huge tunes like [Horns 2000](#) and [20/20](#) and later went on to produce Lily Allen's [first album](#). Clearly, my A&R skills were on point.

Based on all that, I had really thought we had deserved to pick something up at the 2002 awards. We had smashed the arse out of the scene and — I am not going to lie — I was pissed we did not win anything.

Awards are a funny thing; if you are not nominated you either think it's a fix or a waste of time. But if you are in contention, obviously you want to win. I said to myself that I was going to go hard body over the next twelve months. I am a very competitive person and hate losing at anything. So, we'd missed out the year before when I thought we were clear front-runners. This year we were up against big boys like [Andy C's RAM Records](#) and [Ed Rush & Optical's Virus Recordings](#). If anything, we had less chance of winning this time around. No wonder I was sweating. Then I hear the announcement,

“The winner is... Renegade Hardware!”

We took both the “Event” and “Label” awards that night. As Mark and I go up to collect them, I see the ones who are screw-faced and refusing to clap. “But it’s all good,” I’m thinking, “Fuck you, we deserved this last year and we were robbed.” I think that we were given the “Best Label” win to make up for not winning the previous year. We had a good year, but it wasn’t as outstanding as what we’d achieved the year before. “Best Event” though... we definitely deserved it that year.

Renegade Hardware and Valve at the Coronet on 28th June 2003 is still a legendary [rave](#). We had a lineup stacked with the likes of Goldie, Andy C, Friction, Trace, Loxy & Ink, Keaton from Usual Suspects... basically... it was the kind of dance you could only dream of nowadays. Unless you are a millionaire.

To give you an idea of how salty people get: the next day [DJ Hype](#) called me while I was in the Coronet setting up for our next event. I thought he’d called to congratulate me, but the first thing he said was, “What did you do to win that award?” I looked at the phone surprised thinking he can’t be talking to me and I think I laughed at first as I thought he was joking. He then asked again what we did to win the awards. I explained one of the awards was justified and the “Best Label” award was to make up the fact we should have won it the year before. We had a stellar year the year before and I really thought we got robbed due to us not having a big household name in the camp. But the lack of a big name made it better, as winning

this award was a team effort.

Anyway, that night we were winners and it didn't matter what anyone else thought. My stutter comes out when I am very nervous, so Mark gave the acceptance speeches. I remember everyone laughing when he took the opportunity to plug our Coronet dance. We hit the legendary Bar Rumba, popped a few bottles and that was that.

Chapter 2

Keep it moving

Pages 7–10

Up to the age of about seven, my only clear memories are of moving houses. When you are that age, it all just seems normal. I remember Melfort Road in Thornton Heath, Montrell Road opposite the bus garage in Streatham Hill, a house in Streatham Vale... All that was before the family made the voyage back across the Atlantic to live in the USA. More on that later.

My parents had immigrated from Jamaica as part of the second wave of the “[Windrush generation](#)”. My dad arrived in 1963 and my mum in 1965. That was the way it went back then: the man of the house would come over first to get things established and then send for the rest of the family later. My older sister Maxine was born shortly after my mum arrived in the UK. I turned up in 1968 and my younger sister Terri, a few years later.

My parents split when I was about three years old, so I have only

been able to fill in a lot of the details about my family background later. I do not actually remember my mum and dad being in the same room, apart from maybe a couple of times he came with Christmas gifts.

Looking into my family history, I was amazed to find that my great-great-grandfather was German. I've got cousins whose surname is Scharschmidt. There is an area in Jamaica called *German Town* where a lot of white Germans settled in the 1830s. And I suppose with a name like *Hines* - even though it's not spelt the German way - the clues were there.¹

Even though I was born in the UK my upbringing was Jamaican. It was in Patois we spoke, the food we ate, the influence was all around. I am British, not “English” (I don't think you can be black and English), but I feel closely connected to my Caribbean roots as well.

Britain had been sold as a land of opportunity. After the war, the country was fucked. They needed rebuilding, so they reached out to the so-called Commonwealth, including people like my parents in Jamaica. They sold them a dream — a lie, pretty much.

In the sixties, when my parents were trying to find rooms (you wouldn't rent a whole house then, just a room), landlords would have put up signs saying “No blacks, no dogs, no Irish.” Sometimes the landlord would open the door, see you were black and suddenly the

¹[Germans in Jamaica](#). Hines is an alternative spelling of Heinz, which is a short hand of Henry (Heinrich). Same as in the Ketchup brand, see [Heinz \(surname\)](#).

room, which was available five minutes ago, had now mysteriously been rented. That was life.

After my parents split, my mum had to hold down a few jobs. I would guess she worked at least twelve hours a day to feed the three kids she had been left with. She has always been a hard grafter. I suppose I inherited that from her. Her main job was in the accounts department of *Sainsbury's*, the rest of the time she did whatever menial job was on offer. She did a lot of cleaning work.

Times were tight and luxury items were a rarity for my sisters and me. I got those bastard four-stripes instead of Adidas football boots, a Tomahawk instead of a Chopper and I still have memories of those black plimsolls. At the time it felt unfair, but looking back now though it could have been a lot worse. I remember the small things like stopping at the sweet shop on the way home to get penny sweets. I remember pushing my mum's trolley through Brixton Market on a Saturday, hoping to get a patty from the local bakery (and hoping that my mum wouldn't get talking to some friend she hadn't seen for ages and make me miss [Football Focus](#)). It was a big deal when we went to the opening of McDonald's in Croydon. Back then Wimpy was running things, but when Ronald came to the UK, it changed the game.

I also remember we used to have lots of cousins. Now, when I say "cousins" what I mean is that being Caribbean: if your parents knew someone for a good while, then they were automatically considered your family. So, I had cousins all over. We used to take day trips to

Basingstoke and Manchester to visit with them and the drive always seemed like an eternity.

I have got a phobia of cars and I think it might come from when my stepfather was involved in an accident on one of those trips. We were coming back from Basingstoke. I remember the car crashing and spinning round and round. It really shook me. Even now if I must travel, I would rather take the train. I could tell you all the times I have been on the motorway in the last five years and as I get older, the phobia just seems to get worse.

My stepfather (my younger sister's dad) was cool. I remember he had a fish tank with one particular fish that would eat all the others. He never really used to berate me, like he knew he was not my dad, so he did not want to go too far. Unfortunately, he drank too much, and he eventually passed away from alcohol-related kidney problems.

So, my mum was on her own, bringing up three children and not much money to do it with. She was one of fifteen children and while some of her brothers and sisters stayed in Jamaica, a lot of them had emigrated to the USA or Canada. Now in need of a support network, my mum decided it was time to go and join them. Maybe it was because I'd gotten used to moving around so much, but I only vaguely remember my mum telling me and my two sisters that we were moving to the States. In fact, the main thing I remember is that I was excited, because someone told me it was hot over there. In February 1979 we upped and left for new pastures in Florida.

Chapter 3

God Bless America

Pages 11–13

The heat hit me in the face as soon as I got off the plane at *Miami International Airport*. Then I saw my Aunty Merle (my mom's brother Eric's wife) with her red Trans Am and her CB radio like something from [Smokey and the Bandit](#). I was in awe. It was the first time I had been to another country. The first time I'd been on a plane and at ten years old, this was amazing. Strangely, I do not really remember the flight, but I vividly recall the five of us, Aunty Merle, my mum, my sisters and me, piled into that Trans Am.

America was a bit of a culture shock, as everything is massive and much more spread out. The roads, the cars, the houses... everything was much bigger than I had seen in my life back in London.

We moved in with Eric, Aunty Merle and their son Barrington at their house on Volusia Avenue (just around the corner from the Candlelight Oaks project). If you ever heard Eric calling Barrington's

name in that bass-filled voice of his, you knew there was trouble around the corner. Eric did not play. He was old-fashioned, by which I mean, at the drop of a hat he would beat the fuck out of you. There's been one time Barrington and I snuck out to the BMX track. It was literally next door, but when we got back, Barrington got the belt. I felt kind of bad because I had instigated it, but I was glad it was not me getting the rod of correction!

I started school in the seventh grade. In fact, I went to a school specifically for seventh-graders, which I think was called "The Seventh Grade Centre". Obviously, I stood out as soon as I opened my mouth. Everyone wanted me to "Say something," or asked, "Have you met the Queen?" I told them I had met her during the [Silver Jubilee celebrations in 1977](#) when it seemed like the whole of London was decked out in silver. We went to see the procession and she waved in our direction, so in my eyes that counted as meeting her.

Standing out from the crowd was both a blessing and a curse. My English accent made me a girl-puller, but as you can imagine, that did not go down well with the other boys. I was constantly having to throw hands to let them know that we might drink tea and eat crumpets, but we can give out licks if needed as well!

That led to me getting "the paddle". In the UK we had the cane, but in the States you were told to go into the teacher's room, bend over and get three hits from a small cricket bat on your ass. On reflection, Mr. Mancuso enjoyed that part of his job a bit too much. I genuinely believe he got off on it. As I grew more rebellious and

started shooting BB guns, smoking weed and fighting, unfortunately, he had all the excuses he needed to have his fun.

I had never gotten the cane when we lived in London. I was not a bad child. I never really did anything that got me into trouble. I was just obsessed with playing football. Maybe it was the lack of a father figure in my upbringing, but my rebellious side came out when we got to America.

Mr. Mancuso and Ms. Morgan were two teachers who stood out to me, for two very different reasons. While I now believe that Mancuso was probably a paedophile, Ms. Morgan's classes, in contrast, were always a highlight. I do not really remember what she taught, but I remember what she looked like. She just might have been my first crush. With other classes, I was not quite as interested.

I had total confidence that my football skills would get me the scholarship of my choice, so I thought those years would be simple. At age twelve, I thought I had life all figured out: I had football.

Chapter 4

Football Focus

Pages 14–16

Football was my first love and to be honest, nothing else interested me at that age. Seeing [Mario Kempes](#) and the Argentinian team in the [1978 World Cup](#) the year before I moved to the States, really inspired me. I remember going to my first football match. It was a [Crystal Palace](#) against [Wolves](#) game. My Aunty (I use that term loosely like the “cousins” I mentioned a couple of chapters ago) lived on Holmesdale Road, where Selhurst Park was, so a family friend took me there. I remember seeing [Vince Hilaire](#), who was one of the first black players in the [First Division](#), as the top-flight was called back in the day.

I liked footballers with exciting names. One of my favourite players from that era was [Rainer Bonhof](#), who played for Germany and had a hard shot. [Paul Mariner](#) of [Ipswich](#), was also a hero of mine. But my favourite team pre-America was [Queens Park Rangers](#). [Gerry](#)

Francis was captain of England, so, as he played for Queens Park Rangers, I supported them. They had Stan Bowles as well, who was arguably their greatest player ever.

I had been good at football from a young age. I played for my school, Eardley Elementary and for the Cub Scouts. I've got strong memories of how cold it could get on the pitch when I was playing for my school team, but nothing dampened my love for the game. I hated having to run errands for my mum on a Saturday because it meant I missed valuable football-playing time. My skills at "soccer", as they called it at my new school in America, gave me a way to fit in. Coming from the home of football, I became the star player and it was weird how the other players parents fawned over me.

Even in a new country, my mum was still juggling multiple part-time jobs, but the other parents took turns to give me a ride to practice. I figured out the reason why they were going to all this trouble: with me on the team we almost always won.

I lacked in size — I was about six stone soaking wet — but I made up for it in skill. I was soon selected for a district team in a county-wide tournament. It was four hours away in Fort Walton Beach and the dad of my team-mate Thad Bostic drove us all the way there. We stayed in a hotel and I felt like a superstar. That came to an end when we got smacked up in all three games we played over the weekend. That tournament made me realize, that I was not the only good player around!

I had the passion though. I remember playing for the Junior

Varsity team, which, if you are not familiar with American schools, is just below the “varsity” (the oldest kids in the school). We were playing a rival called [Apopka](#) at their ground. I had a poor first half and tried to take on the whole team by myself. I got frustrated after losing a ball in midfield, leading to our opponents scoring, and I lashed out at a rival player. After I got sent off, I had to sit on the school bus by myself until the end of the game. I was in tears, as I thought, I had let the team down.

Football was my religion. Unfortunately, my mum’s religion was [Seventh Day Adventist](#) and that was bound to lead to trouble.

Chapter 5

Fitting In

Pages 17–21

After a year of staying with my uncle, my mum managed to get a house on the other side of town. We moved to Larry Drive which was opposite the park and tennis courts.

DeLand was a small town, which had about 600.000 residents, and was situated between Orlando and Daytona Beach. Its claim to fame was Stetson University and the fact that Terrence Trent D'Arby's mum lived there. It is one of those towns where, if you drive too fast down the I-95, you could easily miss it.

I met an old lady who encouraged me to take up tennis and as the courts were close by I took up the offer. That summer if I wasn't playing tennis, I was getting pocket money by being a ball boy.

During that time, I met Marc Carter who became my best friend. He lived on the road opposite and we had a lot in common. We used to ride BMX bikes in the home-built racetrack in the forest just around

the corner from where we lived. Sometimes we would be at the local *7-Eleven* playing *Ms. Pacman* and *Centipede* all day. Everything we did had to be a competition. There had to be a winner and to be honest, it was normally Marc. Football was the only thing I beat him at.

Marc was originally from New York. His step-father, a former NYPD cop, had moved the family to Florida to retire. His dad was a strict disciplinarian and, in some ways, became a father figure to me. You see, I do not remember my father being in my life. I saw him once or twice in a few years when he came to the States and passed by to drop money in a Christmas card.

Marc and I had some great battles during video games and would take great pleasure in beating and goading the other. I literally cannot remember any other close mates from that time. I knew a few boys from the football team, but Marc was a homeboy. When I went back to DeLand years later, I saw him still there doing the same old, same old.

I was kind of withdrawn at school because I had a bad stutter and my eyes were crossed, so I didn't really mix with loads of kids. Most of the time, when not in school, I was in the park fishing (as a lake was there) or playing with BB guns. My mum went crazy when I secretly got an air gun and used to shoot the birds in our back garden. One day Marc and I were messing about and he fucked around and shot me in the face with the air gun. He damn near blinded me.

I was a mischievous kid then and before you know it, I was stealing

my mum's car at night and driving around town. When I thought my mum was asleep, I snuck out my bedroom window, picked up Marc and we went joy riding. After a few weeks of doing this, eventually my mum's friend noticed her car missing and told her. The following day I got the beating of my life.

Talking about beatings: I do ponder if the licks that were dished out when I was a kid had any positive effect. My mum was the mum who would pick up everything and anything and hit you with it. The funny thing is, when punishment time came my mum used to say to Teri, my younger sister, "Go and get the belt," and Teri would run off with a smile on her face and come back with the biggest one.

Certain things stick with you all through life, and there's one incident I will never forget. My mum came home from work and I did not do something she had asked me to do. Maybe it was hanging the washing out or emptying the garbage, something like that. Anyway, she starts cussing and then suddenly she picks up the hot iron she was using and threw it at me. Luckily, I was young and nimble and managed to avoid being scarred for life by dodging the iron. Since I dodged the iron, she accidentally smashed up the chandelier. I got another beating for making her smashing that up, too.

I used to go to school the next day and the white kids would look at me and be like, "What the fuck happened to you?" I found out most white kids never got beats like black kids. As a result, I made a rule to never beat my kids and stuck to it. I have never put my hands on my son. I do not believe near death beatings solve the problem.

I used to go to bed most nights wishing my mum died when she gave me the rod of correction. Eventually, as I got older, she saw the beatings were not doing the job and got my uncle to do them.

Uncle Mike was probably my favourite uncle, as, when we first moved to the States, I helped out in his shoe shop.

Another job I had - and hated with a passion - was picking oranges. If you do not know: Florida is the orange juice capital of America. More oranges are produced there than anywhere else in America. My stepfather got a job working in the orange groves and I was forced to accompany him. Imagine Django heat and you are in the orange groves climbing trees, shaking off the oranges. Then you get a big satchel and have to pick them up. Then you put them in a skip. All of this had to be done in the most sweltering heat. Ardmore Farms was the name of the big plant in DeLand which processed the juice and sent it all around the world.

A few incidents stood out for me when it came to race issues between America and England. I think racism is more upfront in the States, whereas over here it is more discreet.

When I was growing up in South London, I remember seeing the [National Front](#). You could not miss the knee-high [Dr. Marten](#) boots and [MA2 jackets](#) with the swastika on the back and, to cap it off, the notorious skinhead. The words “Go back to your own country you [coon](#),” or “[jungle bunny](#)” were bandied around. And they would go out “[Paki-bashing](#)”. It was peak times in the late seventies and eighties if you were black or Asian living in England. But racism in

America, I think, is worse.

I remember someone calling our house and saying the [Ku Klux Klan](#) was going to burn a cross in our front garden, it really shook me up. Remember, it had only been fifty years since blacks were not allowed to mix and use the same facilities as whites. All the time I used to see those rednecks driving the big [4x4 trucks](#) with the Confederate flag in the back, a shotgun on a rack and chewing [Red Man](#) or [Skool](#) tobacco.

Chapter 6

Growing up

Pages 22–25

During the summer months when I was off school, I got a job at the local museum. I was the “junior groundskeeper”. The hours were long, and the sun would beat down on you like you owed it money. But at least I was making a bit of money and could do what I wanted with it. After I had given some to my mum for food and that sort of thing, I had enough left over to buy the football boots I had wanted.

An incident happened a few years before I came back to England, which left me emotionally scarred and I think that’s where part of my anger and depression comes from. It happened when we moved from the other side of DeLand to Larry Drive.

I immediately made friends with my next-door neighbours, the Parados. I say next door, but they lived opposite me. They were an Italian American family consisting of Sam Parado and his two sons, Mike and Tony. Mike was a few years older than me and Tony was

the eldest. I used to go over to their house all the time to play and watch the older one fix cars. With Tony, whether it was riding BMX, playing American football or going to the local drive-in movies, I was pretty much a fixture across the road, if I wasn't at mine or Marc's. I guess Sam's wife, and mother to the two boys, died as it was just them. I never really asked, but either she divorced him or died. When you are that age, which at the time was thirteen, I think you are totally innocent and take everything at face value.

One Sunday afternoon, I was in my front garden kicking my football, Sam comes out of his house and motions me to come over. I think nothing of it as it is Sam, so I walk into his house. When I got inside, he had his penis out. I ran out of the house and back to my house and I told my mum.

Shortly after, the police was called and I was taken down to the local police station. Remember, this is 1982 and DeLand is a small town where everyone knows everyone. I got asked a few questions, then was told I was going to take a lie detector test. I was like "Ok, I don't have nothing to hide," and in my mind I assumed they would see I was telling the truth. I took the lie detector test, was told I failed it and a few hours later I was back home.

My mum was very religious and proud. I thought she assumed I was lying about the incident, as I failed the polygraph test, thus bringing shame and embarrassment to the family. Years later I would find out, that lie detector tests aren't exactly 100 percent accurate.

I was devastated because my mum wouldn't believe me. She

never exactly said she did not believe me, but I knew what was going through her mind. But I believe the shame of that incident helped make her mind up: I was going back to London to live with my father.

The incident was never spoken about. Like it never happened and I didn't bring it up with my mum till thirty years later. She came over to stay with me for two weeks a few years ago and instantly I thought it would be good to see her and try to rekindle a mother-son relationship. It were the worst two weeks of my life. She still spoke to me like I was her fifteen-year-old son who left America all those years ago. She even had the nerve to say to my son, "Ain't you glad, you don't stutter like your dad?" I was hurt to my core. What parent says that?

After enduring two weeks of her, and after she landed back in the States, I called my Aunt Thelma (my mum had fourteen brothers and sisters, and I do not think their upbringing was exactly the best). I suggested we have a three-way conversation with my mum, as she finds it hard to admit fault. Plus, I wanted answers. Over thirty years after the incident, I finally brought it up and asked her why didn't she believe me at the time. She said it was not a case of her not believing me, it was a case of she could not counter what the police said as we were in America illegally. If she had piped up, the authorities would have deported us. So she thought I was the sacrificial lamb of that situation.

I recently went online and tried to see if the dude was dead. Hopefully he is rotting in hell somewhere. As you get older, you under-

stand how paedos work and Sam made sure he was a pillar in the community. I think he was a baseball coach and a security guard, so everyone thought he was such a nice guy.

Obviously, his sons and I stopped talking afterwards and I got accused of trying to wreck his good character. Hopefully, they found out what their dad was really like. I think paedos are the worst kind of people and definitely should be castrated.

Chapter 7

Back in the UK

Pages 26–29

Six months after I came back from America, everything changed again. I moved in with my father. I had not lived with him since I was about three years old, but was hoping we could bond. Initially, I was excited to be back in the UK. I was going to the home of English football and I also had this nostalgic feeling that everything was going to be good with my dad and we could have a loving father-son relationship.

He lived in Stanmore in Middlesex and I remember thinking how cold it was compared to the sunny climate of Florida. The local hang out spots for the teenagers were Harrow Bus Station and the local Wimpy, and I soon found myself in the same situation as when I was in Florida.

I had come back with a slightly hinted American accent. The girls loved it and the boys wanted to fight me. I got into a few [rucks](#) and

got beaten up by a gang of racists just a few weeks after I landed back in the country.

I remember making friends with a guy called Andrew who was local. His family turned out to be Seventh Day Adventist like my mum and I went to church a few times with them. I remember thinking, “Déjà vu...”

As I didn't know anyone in the area, I was bored. So bored, that I decided to join the army to get away. At the time I thought it was a good idea. I wanted to join the *Catering Corps* as I knew I would not be on the front line. So I went to the *Recruiting Centre* in town and got the papers. I had to go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Greenwich to do my medical examination. Thank God, I had flat feet and I was not allowed to join. In their eyes, my flat feet made it impossible for me to make it through basic training which, I think, was twelve weeks of hard training.

At the time I was disappointed, but on reflection it was a godsend. Can you imagine me in the army? In the mid-eighties, being a black dude? I probably would not have lasted long anyway, due to my fiery nature. At the first sign of any racism I would have been throwing hands.

After six months, my father kicked me out. I do not know exactly why. I think he told me to come back a certain time and I was late. Anyway, he called the police on me. It was a shock to my system when they told me to leave the house. I had no immediate family here, so I was now homeless. I remember the first night vividly.

After a week of living on the tube and sleeping in parks, I started sleeping in those old [red telephone boxes](#). Eventually, I got hold of my dad's cousin and ended up staying with her for a few months. She lived in West Norwood and had three kids.

Sis was a strange woman: if ever I saw the Huxtables in real life, it was her and her kids. They had piano lessons and went to private school. They tried so hard to be accepted by white society. I was frowned upon by Sis and her family, as I had no ambition to be like them. I still just wanted to play football. It was all totally different from what I was accustomed to. Junior was the oldest and I ended up staying in his old room, which was the loft conversion.

One of my memories from that era was [Boris Becker](#) winning [Wimbledon](#) at age seventeen. I kept thinking, "What the fuck is dude eating? How can you be so big at that age?"

I was enrolled in the local Youth Training Centre - the YTS.¹ It was supposed to get you ready for a job. But all we used to do there, was to smoke weed. And yet again, I had grief from the local boys, as I had an accent and they did not like it. There was one guy, called Michael, who made a habit of trying to bully me. Years later when I put on some weight, I saw the wasteman in Brixton. I said to him, "Remember me? The skinny, scrawny dude who you used to try fuck with when I came from the States?" The look he gave me said it all. I hate bullies and dude was always trying to make fun of me.

I was living near Nettleford Hall, which was a community centre

¹It is actually [Youth Training Scheme](#).

opposite the train station. [Coxsonne](#), who along with [Saxon](#) (who were one of the biggest South London sounds at the time) used to have dances there. I used to sneak in and marvel at the setup: massive big speakers and the bassline used to lick you in the chest.

The dance was nice too. And the pungent smell of sensimilla was in the air all night... In those times you could buy a five-pound draw: the local dealer would get a betting slip, take out his big bag of weed, sprinkle some in the betting slip, wrap it up and send you on your way.

I was very mischievous at that time. I remember going to the local bus garage and trying to steal a bus. We got in the garage and got a [Number 2](#) bus, which ran from West Norwood to the West End and took the handbrake off. The next thing you know the bus was hurtling out the garage. We crashed the bus and I thought for sure I was going to get caught. I did dumb shit like that more out of boredom than anything else.

I did not last long at my dad's cousin's house and eventually I was told to leave. Yet again, I found myself homeless, with no immediate family and nowhere to live.

Chapter 8

Survival

Pages 30–35

To survive, I was snatching chains and going to the pawn shop to sell them. Back then, 22-carat gold was the lick. “Tom Foolery” as we called it, which came from Cockney rhyming slang. Anyway, one day I followed a lady from Leicester Square Station to Mile End on the Central Line. As soon as she came out of the station, I snatched her chain and was off [Usain Bolt](#) style. Unbeknownst to me, a few Cockney builders had seen me and gave chase. Before I knew it, I was rugby tackled to the ground and held until the feds came.

I was arrested and sentenced to nine months in Chelmsford Prison. At the time, I think, it was a young offenders place. The upside was I had three meals a day and a roof over my head, the downside was everything else. Obviously in those days there was no Wi-Fi, phones, or PlayStations. We were locked up twenty-three hours a day, just one hour out of the cell. We had to use a bowl in the cell as a toilet

and had one shower a week. All the time I spent in there I was like, “Fuck this. I ain’t coming back to this shithole, so I’d better find an honest way to make a living.”

Now, because of that, I think me going to jail in those early years was the best thing to happen to me. In all the times I did go to prison I never got into any major trouble. Some people want to act like the big, bad boss man. I decided to keep my head down, not get into any trouble and try and get out that shithole as quick as possible.

One of my other stints in jail was when I got into an altercation with some dude who was an OG from West End days. Lex was a bully and used to try and pick on Mark and me. After a few months of getting harassed by the dude, we saw him coming out of [Brixton Station](#), rushed him and gave him some licks.

A few months later, I see him again, this time in West End. We agree to go around the corner and have a fair one, i.e. no weapons. We go around the corner and he pulls out a knife. Before you know it, the police turns up. I say to the policeman that he threw a knife in the skip. I wouldn’t have normally said anything, but he had agreed prior to going around the corner it was no weapons, so I felt like I had justification. Anyway, the policeman said he needed me to go to the station and make a statement.

We get to the police station and the officer told the Desk Sergeant, he saw me throw a knife in the skip. To say I was taken aback is an understatement. I asked the Desk Officer to please see if there was any CCTV footage and check the knife for my fingerprints. Of course,

none of what I asked was done and the officer put charges on me. I guess he needed to have more convictions so he could climb the ladder quickly and make detective. Then people wonder why I have no faith in the police force. I got sent to prison for a crime which I did not commit.

I went to court near Heathrow Airport and got sentenced to twelve months. I felt sick to my stomach as I was driven straight from the court to prison in the back of a police car, handcuffed the entire journey. The prison I went to was called [Haslar](#). It reminded me of Alcatraz as it was on its own island and you had to get a ferry from Southampton to get there. I am pretty sure it is a mental institution now. The fact that you had to get a ferry made it even more depressing.

I felt so isolated and lonely. Luckily, I knew a few bods inside. I can relate the year I was there to sporting events, we were allowed to watch the [boxing match](#) with Sugar Ray Leonard and Marvin Hagler.

I saw a few incidents whilst there. Some dude got his head smashed open by another inmate who put snooker balls in a sock. Apparently, the guy was a kiddy-fiddler. It wasn't my business so I looked the other way.

To this day I don't eat fried toast and porridge any more, because it takes me back to that place. Which reminds me: there was a ritual in jails then. I'm not sure if it happens now, but when you are on your last day, you give your breakfast away.

Being in Haslar was like being in the Army. As it was classed as a young offenders institution, every day you had to make your bed a certain way, you had to have certain creases in the sheets and also you had to have your kit and uniform a certain way.

Tobacco, or burn as they call it, is currency in jail. If you have tobacco you are king and can almost get anything in exchange for it. If you had enough, you could smuggle your girl in as well.

There is a survey out there noting that most people who offend at some point re-offend. I did not want to be that statistic and only got arrested a few times after that — lesson learnt: jail was not for me.

I came out and quickly acclimatized back to the streets and before you know I was back up Leicester Square making dough, doing what I did best. It was during this time I met my first serious girlfriend, Lynn, from Watford.

We met when she and her mates were walking through the square and I stopped her and charmed her straight away. We lasted about twelve months, and every time she came up from Watford, I took the night bus back with her. It was a three hour round trip! What was I thinking?

After a year of being with her, her parents found out I was black and hit the roof. Also, I think she had a pregnancy scare. The ultimatum was set: it was either her family or me, as her mum so eloquently put it.

I saw Lynn many years later in an eatery in town. I was with my partner at the time so we both only made eye contact. She still looked

good.

She was not the first girl to give me an ultimatum about me by her parents and race was always a factor.

In my late teens I dated a Jewish chick named Hannah. Her parents had a big pad in Barbican — anyone who knows Barbican knows you have to have money to live there. They also had a summer house near Southampton.

Whilst I was seeing her, I went to her house one weekend (most weekends the rest of the family used to go away and she had the house to herself). While I was there her dad came home early and caught me in his bed and said to her, “If you lay down with dogs you will get fleas.”

I was gobsmacked. He had the nerve to say that in front of me. But then again, I’d be pissed if another man was laying down in my bed with my daughter. In my own bed. I saw her shortly after and her dad got rumbled for having an affair. All the time he was looking down on me, he was sneaking about his missus.

Looking back at this time of my life, I would change a lot if I could. They say hindsight is 20/20 and I must agree. I have a lot of regrets over my actions and bad decisions of my youth, but I am determined to transform my experiences into something good to give back to society.

Due to my contacts within the music industry, I have been to a couple of colleges and workshops where I spoke to students and young offenders. I was asked some years ago by [Craggz \(Craggz &](#)

[Parallel Forces](#)) to speak to his students on his music course at the university he taught at. Out of all speakers he had come through, he told me, I was the only one with a standing ovation from his class. His students told him I was raw and honest. They appreciated how open I was telling them of my time coming up from the streets and dealing drugs to survive.

I was very inspired by these experiences. So, I hope to give back more, work with young offenders to help them see it is never too late to change course and better your life. It took me a total of five custodial sentences throughout my life to be the catalyst for change in me. After my last time, I knew I had to make a change for good and that being in the belly of the beast was not for me.

Chapter 9

West End

Pages 36–51

I found [Centrepoin](#)t, which was a homeless charity based in Soho that provided a bed for me. I linked up with a dude called Gavin DaSilva, who was originally from Harlow in Essex. He was the first one to take me to the West End.

I remember going to Piccadilly Circus at first and being attracted by the bright lights. What brought everyone together in West End was the common bond of abandonment. Mostly everyone who congregated up there were all misfits and runaways. Mostly everyone had been kicked out of the house. We all just drifted to where the bright lights were, I guess.

Back then, in the mid-eighties, West End was a dodgy place where pimps, prostitutes and thieves roamed and everyone was on a hustle. I remember as kids we would go up to Soho and buy weed from the older dudes in the gambling houses and shebeens (which is a

Jamaican word for an illegal drinking and gambling den). All the old boys from West End would play cards and tell stories about how many girls they had in the pimping days. You had Van Cleef, Zeke, Crunch, Bones, Zaghi Dread, Willie the Owner, African Mikey, African Freddy and a well-regarded “dipper” (pickpocket) called Errol.

Talk about the strange characters they would meet. One of the many stories I remember Errol telling was, that in the early eighties some posh white dude came up to him in Soho and said he had a briefcase with 500 pounds inside and a hammer. He said to Errol that to get the 500 quid, he had to beat him with the hammer. Me, being young and naive, said to him, “So what did you do?” He replied, “What did you think I did? I beat the crap out of him.”

He always told me another infamous story. I have repeated it many times myself. Some dude approached him, again in Soho, and said he liked to tie a bag of bees around his genitals and to smother his balls with honey. I sat there open-mouthed, not knowing those stories were an everyday occurrence.

Errol was one of the guys I used to look up to as a kid running around the streets of West End. He was a good thief, he started in the eighties going up Edgeware Road pickpocketing rich Arabs. Then he’d go up to Soho and frequent the bars.

One of my favourite stories he told me was a story of when he was addicted to crack. He was leaving his house one day to go to West End to pickpocket when he heard a voice coming from his cupboard. He opened the cupboard and inside was his crack pipe

sitting there, talking to him. “Errol, Errol,” it said, “where you going?” He reassured it, “I’m not going to be long.” “Make sure... make sure,” the pipe replied. I like to think I was open enough to try every drug once, but that story had me shook, I stayed away from crack.

If you never went to Soho and visited a [clip joint](#), then you have never lived. What would happen is, a beautiful lady would stand outside these drinking dens and entice you inside with the offer of free entry but would conveniently forget to tell you the drinks were at rip-off prices. You would order a soft drink or a beer and end up getting a bill for 50 pounds plus. If you made a noise and resisted, these big dudes would come out the back and try to intimidate you. You either paid or you got the shit beat out of you and were frog-marched to the nearest cash machine. I am pretty sure everyone I know who used to frequent Soho, got knocked at least once with that scam.

Besides selling tickets outside the nightclubs, I used to make a raise (which meant making money) from taking tourists to the prostitutes and getting a drink for each customer I would bring. It would quickly add up, to the point I was making about a hundred and fifty pounds a night combining the two. For a teenager in those days, that was good money.

After selling tickets, I would go Brixton and get some weed. Most weekends I would go to the late-night cinema in Old Kent Road, which up until recently was the Coronet Theatre. I did plenty of events in that gaff and always used to reminisce. The good thing about the late

night cinemas was that you could smoke weed and watch kung fu flicks. After the film we would head home trying out the kicks and punches we saw on the big screen, either on ourselves or strangers we saw on the bus.

I got into a routine where we would sleep all day and get up about 6 p.m. to head to West End for 8 p.m. to secure the tickets for the evening session. I was always a good salesman and had the gift of the gab. In order to always have one up on the rivals, I learnt a little bit of Italian and French, just enough to be able to communicate with the tourists.

We had so many bust-ups with Conrad, the manager of the Empire Leicester Square. He thought we were a bunch of scallywags that were making money off free tickets. But to us it was a hustle that did not involve the chance of going to jail. It was a game of cat and mouse with the club every night, Conrad would march up and down with bouncers in tow and try to take the tickets. If he actually saw us selling the tickets, he would go up to the tourists and tear them up. Dude was a ball-ache, but he had to be seen to be doing something to deter us.

The other club we sold tickets for was the infamous Hippodrome, which is now a casino. They had a notorious bouncer called Morgan. He was a gay South African and dude was built like a brick shithouse. He had muscles on top of muscles, and it was a running joke that you don't let Morgan get hold of you. Many a time he used to come out of the club with his two Rottweilers in tow, hoping to catch us in the

act.

The thing is, the tickets were given out free to entice tourists to the club. So in fact, no one was losing out. The authorities hated to see us use our initiative to make some quick money though.

Those early years were productive, in the sense that I quickly got an eye for business. Later on, I did some ticket touting for concerts and festivals. Clem and Blue were the two dudes who put me onto the concert ticket side of things, as I saw how much money they were making. Those boys were grafters, and they used to go to World Cups, Grand Prix and tennis tournaments all around the world. If tickets were on sale for an event, those boys were on it.

Many years later I heard Conrad was managing a bar in Camden. The funny thing is, later on down the line we would end up buying tickets off Conrad and Morgan, as they saw we were going to make money with or without them.

It was during these times that I started to link chicks from hanging up West End. We would sell them tickets and then arrange to meet them inside. We had the swag and the lyric. Most of these chicks only saw black dudes on television and the number of chicks I had was insane. I think that, in 1987, I tried to keep a record of the chicks I bedded. I used to do the whole notch on the bedpost thing. I stopped at thirty-seven and still had three months of the year to go!

Mostly, the chicks were Scandinavian, Italian, or French. You could have called me Benetton as I linked so many chicks from different countries and backgrounds. We had it to the point chicks

would come to London at least once a year and we would link like clockwork.

We were making dough, linking chicks and we had no responsibilities in life. Things could not have been any sweeter.

Back in the day, I used to get a few chicks due to my resemblance to LL Cool J. If I had a pound for every time I was told I looked like him, I would be mad rich. A few times I went out with the change, the big fat gold rope chain and a few foreign chicks were actually convinced I was him. Those days I was getting it in with the chicks as I had the smooth lyrics, but everyone has a doppelgänger and he was mine. The funny thing is, I actually met him through a mutual friend called Black.

Black was a grimey and sheisty hood rat, but he was a smooth talker. I met him up West End and I think he was called Black due to two reasons: he was black as the night and always was dressed in black from head to toe. We had a few mutual mates and quickly began to make money together.

Black used to tell me war stories about Brooklyn and Queens and one day he was like, "I know LL Cool J." In my head I was like, "Whatever negro," but he kept saying it for months. One day, we were chilling in the square, and he comes rolling up with LL Cool J. It was funny. We both looked at each other and I'm sure he saw the resemblance as well. I said, "what's up," gave him a pound and kept it moving. After that day I never doubted any more of Black's stories.

It was during these times we started squatting. Back then the laws

were very different, and you could break into a premises, change the locks, hot wire the electric and legally stay in the place for quite a long time.

The first squat we got was on the infamous *North Peckham Estate*. It was a sprawling council block which was literally a concrete jungle and mainly housed low-income families. It's like the government gave you a place on the estate and forgot about you.

We always used to take chicks on a maze when bringing them back to the yard. The trick was, you did not want them to remember how to get to your yard, in case they turn up unannounced and uninvited another time and mash up any other runnings.

There was a dread called Tony who lived on the block next to ours. That is when I first started to buy ounces of hash or weed and started shotting on a serious basis.

Whilst selling tickets up West, my other hustle was selling Moroccan hash or weed. In those days the hash that was "in" was either the red seal or gold seal. I came up with the idea of going to the shop and making up my own red seal or gold seal. You had to think on your feet.

One of the older hustlers was Samson. I looked up to him at the time as he was slightly older and was a top thief. We used to go to the shopping centres in places like Kingston, Woking and Guildford and thief shavers and other electrical items. The dude who managed the Kentucky Fried Chicken in Leicester Square used to buy them off us.

My strong point was not actually shoplifting though. I was better at sweet talking dough out your pocket by being a charmer.

West End was full of characters - some good, some bad. Two of the most memorable were Jif Leslie and Zharkoff. The best way to describe them is that they were a pair of bullies.

Zharkoff was 6'4" and built like a bodybuilder, with a chiselled face and jawline. It was like he was cut straight from Marvel Comics. Allegedly, he was a European kick-boxing champion and was notorious for going to clubs and beating up the bouncers.

Jif Leslie was his sidekick. He got the name as he was one of the first dudes to walk around with a [Jif bottle](#) with acid in and would use it on anyone, anywhere, any time.

In those days, dudes would try it on you and almost test your gangster. You stood firm, or you would get picked on and robbed on a daily.

Zharkoff and Jif Leslie were real life "Debos" from the film [Friday](#). When they walked past, you hid your jewellery. I was cool with them, but soon found out that they tried bullying me due to me being one of the top earners in the square. I was up there to make my money, but with the reputation as an earner, came jealousy. I had watched them rob everyone around me, one by one. They had a monopoly on the area and were trying to enforce their tax on our earnings. I had held my own, but they began to move in on me too.

One day I had enough of them trying to bully me. I could tell things were heading to a physical altercation and it wasn't going to

end well. It was them or me. My mate and I hatched a plan: we were going to his drum (house) with machetes tied to our wrist. The reason for tying them to the wrist was if your chopping someone up, there is less chance of the machete slipping from your grasp. Someone can only take so much, and I had reached the point of no return. We knocked on Jif Leslie's flat. He wasn't in. I often think what would have happened if he opened the door.

Years later, he moved literally five minutes from our studio, and from time to time he passed by. He was known in the area as a madman and often use to go in the barbers and punch up random dudes. Apparently, he went to Ghana and started to fuck with the Obeah doctors and witchcraft and came back even more mad than before.

Zharkoff went to Scribbles, which was a notorious Cockney wide boy's hangout off Old Kent Road. The place was always filled with wrong 'uns. It was a typical hang-out haunt for the [Millwall](#) fans who wore [Stone Island](#), [Ben Sherman](#), [Reebok Classics](#) and snorted cheap stepped on coke (pub grub).

Anyway, allegedly Zharkoff went in the gaff and touched some girl's ass, whose boyfriend was a face about town. The dude apparently attacked Zharkoff with a claw hammer. I heard he suffered brain damage and was never the same again.

Lenny McClean

Pages 45–47

A funny story I vividly remember from my days of shotting pills was back in the day when the notorious bouncer [Lenny McClean](#) (the bare-knuckle boxing champion who starred in the [Guy Ritchie](#) film *Snatch*¹) caught me serving up in [Camden Palace](#).

It was a Tuesday night event that wasn't even dance music. Not sure what made me and my pals think we could work in there, but we went anyway. As soon as I walked in, I didn't think there was money to be made in the venue and I must have only sold a few pills, when two meathead security dudes came over and asked me to accompany them to the fire exit. I don't think I was actually asked, more like pushed through the fire doors with one of them grabbing my clothing tightly. I was going nowhere even if I tried.

I assumed it would be a quick pat down and I would be on my way. I'd discarded the pills soon as they arrived and put hands on me. As I was getting searched Lenny walks in, puts on knuckle dusters, gives me two punches to my face and tells me never to come back. I think they had spotters, dudes who would ask if you if you had pills then run back and inform security. I stumbled out the exit and when I got home and got up in the morning my face looked like [The Elephant Man](#).

¹It was not *Snatch*, but [Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels](#)

The incident did not deter me, as the following few weeks I returned in disguise. I made sure I was on the low, made some dough and made it out without getting fucked up again.

Lenny was a fearsome figure, built like a brick shithouse. Usually, if the bouncers physically assaulted me, I would think of going back to the club and trying to do something to them. But Lenny was Lenny. I had to chalk the beating up as a loss. Fair enough they caught me shotting, why not just throw me out? But to put on knuckle dusters, I found that a bit extreme.

Back then there were no door badges and security checks. Any lump on steroids could get a job on the doors. A few years later Lenny found more trouble when he and Lopez (who was a bouncer I got to know over the years from going clubbing) threw a customer outside for being drunk. Dude ended up dying after hitting his head on the concrete. Lopez and Lenny were on remand for a while, then both of them [bust the case and walked](#).

Peckham Dave

Pages 47–48

When I was running up West End, doing what I did best, which was making money, I got into an incident which ended up with me getting stabbed in my back.

It was a Friday night and we were all gathered in the square. There was a dude, let's call him Peckham Dave, and he and I really

did not get on. He and his boys were slightly younger and a bit wild and they came up to the square later on my tour of duty, as I liked to call it.

Up West, everyone is on the hustle and the cardinal sin was when you interrupted someone if they were making a sale, whether it be tickets or weed. Anyway, dude kept interrupting me when I was speaking to some punters. Enough was enough. We exchanged words and quick as a flash we got into a physical encounter.

I was getting the better of him and when we got separated, he pulled out a knife. Whilst we were tussling again, he stabbed me. Obviously, my adrenaline was high and it was only afterwards that someone pointed out I had blood on the back of my tee shirt. I got taken to the local hospital and after spending a night in there, I was discharged.

I used to walk with my knife most times, but that day I was going to a club to make dough and I did not want to take the chance of getting caught with a knife and drugs.

I've seen the dude earlier this year in Peckham, sitting on a bench, cracked out, asking for money. Obviously, life is not treating him too well. I strongly believe in karma and I truly believe he got that.

Bouncer Tales

Pages 48–49

Obviously, after going out for so long over the years, you get to

know bouncers — some fair, some corrupt. There was one particular dude, who was a power-hungry cunt, to put in layman's terms. You know those dudes: the ones who are nobody Monday to Friday, then, when the weekend comes, they put on a badge and a hi-vis jacket, and they turn into Superman. He was a regular at the door of the Iron Bar Club (in Ladbroke) and a few other spots and he was always acting like he was King Kong.

One night, my mate Eugene and I went to [Subterranea](#). I think it was the Legendary Rotation night. As we were going in, we saw the wasteman on the door. As usual he was overbearing, and I muttered under my breath, "Why can't someone shoot the cunt?"

Obviously, it was said in jest, but lo and behold as we were leaving the venue someone ran up and bust couple shots at dude. A panic ensued and the other security locked the inner doors. I think the feds turned up and cordoned off outside.

Eventually, we were allowed out and I saw dude on the floor holding his leg. It is almost a shame they did not shoot and killed him. Usually, I would not find any joy in hearing someone got shot, but dude was a bully and got what he deserved.

Hippodrome

Pages 50–51

Does anyone remember the Hippodrome drum and bass events? Most of them started at 4 a.m. and finished at midday. It was the

stuff of legends: where can you go out now at those times and rave?

I was in there not only to rave but also to make money. This was a year before I stopped selling pharmaceutical products in clubs and fully turned my attention to running a record label.

Anyway, some chick I recognized from just going out came up to me and asked if I had pills. I said yes and then she said, "I don't have any money, but I can give you a blow job in exchange for some pills." I needed no second offer; we went into the men's cubicles. I was getting a shine when someone knocks at the door. I did not know at the time that she had a boyfriend who was head of security. He forced the door open. By then I had pulled up my trousers. But he wasn't stupid.

This dude was a top boy. I will not even dare to say his name, but I knew him by his name and reputation. Before this incident, I saw him crack a champagne bottle over someone's head at another spot, so I knew dude wasn't someone to fuck with.

I told him I did not know it was his chick, which was the truth. No shiner is worth a beating from dude. He wanted to beat the shit out of me, but I convinced him he should take it up with his chick. By this time other bouncers arrived on the scene, a few knew me and told dude to forget about it.

Luckily, I knew a few naughty boys. I made a call a few days after and word got back to him to leave me alone. Not going to lie, I was worried for my safety a bit after that. Apparently, dude knew where my studio was located, but he would have looked silly if someone

asked why he put hands on me. What could he say? “My sket of a girlfriend gave him a blow job in exchange for pills...”

Chapter 10

Acid Drama

Pages 52–63

During the late eighties, acid¹ (aka JIF) was the “in” ting and you walked road with it (mainly to protect yourself from other dudes who used it as an intimidation factor or other rival crews trying to rob you). It was always a race to see who could come up with the most innovative combinations to make the most potent acid.

I am not sure what possessed me to try and make my own, but there I was at the hardware store buying the ingredients. I thought I would make my own concoction: paint stripper, bleach and all other types of chemicals were bought. All were put together in a glass bottle and put under my kitchen sink for two days.

Early Saturday morning I woke up and went to open the bottle. As soon as I opened it, it blew up in my face. I ran out my house screaming and clutching my face. Luckily, my mate was with me at

¹Real acid, not the drug.

the time and he flagged down a passing car who was accommodating and stopped.

The hospital was not that far away and I got seen quite quickly. The doctor was like, “What happened?” When I told him the mixture I used, he said, “You are lucky not to have lost your sight, or gotten actual scarring on your case.” Lesson learnt that day. I swore I would leave the mixing of chemicals to professionals.

Da early Covent Garden Years — ’84-’88

Pages 53–60

[Covent Garden](#), or as Londoners fondly refer to it — the West End — is based in the heart of the capital. It was the birthplace of UK hip-hop and helped give rise to the London b-boy scene.

The first wave of dancers converged in 1983, and the first two well-known groups were Sidewalk & Micron and Popping Wizards. You had [Ozzie’s Crew](#) and, believe it or not, one of them is still busking up West End to this day.

A few years later, Capricorn Rockers were formed, consisting of Fraggie, Darnell, Duke, Spider Billy, Tassel, Be Hop, Killian, Hofmeister and Airborne. After the breakup of Capricorn Rockers, you had the emergence of Live 2 Break, which consisted of Spider Billy, Halit, Pervis, Airborne, and honorary members Scotty, Chilli a.k.a. James and Eugene. You also had their fierce rivals, London Allstars, who were made up of Special Tee, Dolby D, Milton and Flipski.

I went to Covent in 1985 and was amazed at the talent of the dancers. Everyone from all corners of London would congregate, showing off their dance skills, either original or mimicked from the [Buffalo Girls](#) video by Malcolm McLaren (which is credited by many as being the first video with breakers).

Watching Beat Street and Electric Boogie² everyone wanted to be [Turbo](#). Beat Street became a cult classic and when the terrestrial channels interviewed a few dancers on the breakfast TV show [The Old Grey Whistle Test](#), things got even bigger.

One of the best dancers was [Danny Francis](#). He was one of the best when it came to popping and locking. His crew, Popping Wizards, are credited as being one of the first crews up Covent.

Whilst Covent was in full swing, we would go to Spats off Oxford Street on a Saturday. All the b-boys would congregate there in the afternoon, and many a battle was had. You also had Lyceum, which [Steve Walsh](#) (R.I.P.) was the resident, and Electric Ballroom in Camden. Kissez in Peckham was the main haunt for breakers, and there are a few places in Covent which are regarded as the holy grail, such as The Centre, which was a building which was run by a charity organization.

The breaking was not just in London: you had [Rock City](#) from Nottingham and a few regional crews who were good.

The graffiti scene was also just getting big. You had the likes of [Chrome Angels](#), which consisted of Mode 22, Pride, Zaki Dee, and

²Actually, [Breakin 2: Electro Boogaloo](#)

Scribla as the leading writers. My writing was terrible, and I knew I would never make it as a writer. A few of those boys went on to work with big design companies and ended up making a good living for something which started off as a hobby. You then had the next generation of writers, which were led by Drax and [Robbo](#).

Whilst this was going on, you had the deejay and sound systems doing their thing and [Cosmic Jam's](#) name is held in high regard for his early deejay skills. You also had [Pogo](#) and [DJ Fingers](#), who later went on to form the dance crew [The Sindecut](#).

The main deejays breaking the early electro tunes were [Mike Allen](#) and [Dave Pearce](#). Then you had [Rappatak](#), which were based over in West London and was headed by [Alistair](#).

Pogo, for me, is one of the best deejays of that generation. He went over to New York and performed at the new music seminar and he ended up getting respect from the Americans who, at the time, had a monopoly of the battle scene. He learnt a lot from the infamous Cosmic Jam and the battles he used to have at the DMC UK finals were good as well.

A few years in a row you would see Pogo, [Cut Master Swift](#) and Bonzes all together in the London Heats or the UK finals, which were held at Hippodrome (and then moved on to Royal Albert Hall). I was big into the whole battle scene until props started to be used excessively and it became too gimmicky.

Back in the sound system days, being from South London, you rarely ventured over to West London. If I did, it was either Rappatak,

Carnival, or Nutrament Rock Box parties which made me venture over to West.

The West London boys were not as rugged as us South boys. They had a bit more dough as West was way more affluent, but we had a doggish mindset of, “We are going to eat a food” (i.e. get money no matter how and by any means necessary).

One of the moves back then was to go Southall after the Soul all-dayers that were held in Scrubs Lane, and steam buses and trains. The Archway Boys where the first gang who taught us about steaming trains. It was where they went through the whole train and rob everyone on it.

At first, I hated those boys, but later I moved to Finsbury Park and ended up going to the barbershop they opened. One of them went on to open the hip-hop epicentre known as [Dark n Cold](#) in Soho just down the road from [Black Market Records](#). It was the best hip-hop shop in London and I ended up putting some of my DVDs in there as well.

The main records shops at the time were mainly based in Soho. You had [Groove Records](#), [Hitman Records](#), [Bluebird](#) in Streatham, Black Market, Wyld Pitch and Red Records (which later went on to be Unity).

I was an avid vinyl junkie and started to collect records. My frequent haunt was [Reckless Records](#) in Soho. It specialized in second-hand records and I used to go and buy all the old funk and hip-hop albums. I went in there so much, I got to know a few dudes who

worked behind the counter and I even saw [Chris](#) who worked there a few years ago at a party. Those days were fun. As I didn't really have a nine-to-five job back in the day, so to speak, I was always up Soho. I usually went to Black Market first. This was pre-[Nicky Blackmarket](#) days.

One of the clubs I remember going to around this era was [Mud Club](#), which was run by the eccentric [Phillip Sallon](#), who was a gay Jewish extrovert.

Phillip really wanted his club to stand out. We would join the queue and when we eventually got to the front he would say, "You're not dressed right." Then he would tell you to take your tee shirt off and rip it or some crazy shit like that. It was full of Chelsea or Kings Road yuppie-type kids, mixed with rude boys and some working-class kids thrown in for good measure.

Mud ran for a few good years and [Mark Moore](#) (who later on went to get fame as the front man for [S-Express](#)) was the resident deejay. We used to make so much money in that place. In the early days of shotting pills you could sometimes charge up to 20 pounds for a love dove if you met the right punter.

Around this time, I met [Tim Simenon](#), who was resident at the [Wag Club](#). The summer before he had made the smash hit [Bomb the Bass](#)³ and he was the first producer and deejay I knew personally who had a chart hit.

This period was the heyday for me following sound systems for

³Clayton actually refers to [Beat Dis](#).

reggae. You had the mighty [Saxon](#) from South East Lewisham, who had a host of emcees (or as they say in Jamaica: deejays). The fast chatting style that was used in the early jungle days was originated from this crew, from the likes of [Tipppa Irie](#), [Phillip Levi](#), [Daddy Rusty](#), [Papa Levi](#), [Maxi Priest](#), [Daddy Sandy](#). Over in South West London, you had [Coxsonne](#), which I used to follow from when I was a youth. They used to play in Nettlefordhall in West Norwood.

One of the clashes that really got me into the whole clash ting was Saxon vs Young Lion. They had two clashes, but the [1984 High Wycombe](#) one is legendary. Young Lion was a sound from Battersea, their emcees at the time were Nigger Jimmy, [Bunny Reds](#) and Mister Palmer.

There's probably not many people who remember People's Club in Paddington, Praed Street⁴. [Westwood](#) and Coxsonne used to play there in the mid-eighties.

I cannot thank the following deejays and sound systems enough for my musical education — [Madhatter Trevor](#), Ben and Andy, [Soul 2 Soul](#), [Jay Strongman](#), [Tim Simenon](#) from the Boiler House, [Roy the Roach](#) and Wag Club, to name a few.

UK rap started to gain momentum around this time, and I have to big-up [Rodney P](#) and [Bionic](#). These dudes made it fashionable to rap in our British accent and not feel away. Rodney was from Battersea and was someone I knew vaguely from hanging out in the West End. The fact he has managed to stay relevant after three decades in the

⁴Formerly Q Club. Circa 1981 it was renamed [The Peoples Club](#).

scene is a testament to his work rate.⁵

Blade, Hijack, Cookie Crew, Caveman & MC Mello, Monie Love and She Rockers also made good music at the time. To be honest, I stopped following UK rap after the Chester P and Task Force, Klashnekoff era.

Covent Garden was a place I spent a lot of my time during this era. I remember hitting up shops like Detroit, Cecil G, Gee 2, Dickie Dirts, Portsmouth, Benneton and the Primark of the day — Blue Inc. Mr Buyrite (where you would go if you literally had no money).

We would go round robbing the Aquascutum shop, just randomly grabbing whatever we could get away with, scarves, hats, jackets, umbrellas, etc. That was the brand that would get mad love from the chicks. Eventually security was hired in the shop to deter us.

This was also the era we would go to house and blues parties with bottles of Canei (which the drink of choice for the ladies), and Special Brew (for the guys). I had many fun times back then.

I remember my mate Kenny and I broke into the Africa Centre, which was situated in Covent Garden. I stole a few bottles of Coin-treau and proceeded to drink them. What made me do that I am not exactly sure but fast forward a few hours later and I was at the bus stop in Trafalgar Square throwing up. Apparently, I was so drunk I fell asleep. Kenny still brings it up to this day, with regard to anyone seeing me totally crippled drunk.

I am glad I was there in the thick of it, in such a pivotal place and

⁵Clayton is actually referring to London Posse as one of the first crews to rap in British English.

at such a vital time in London. It was the birthplace and home of the golden eras of several British underground scenes, all merging and buzzing side-by-side. I feel fortunate to have been part of the experience.

Yoko

Pages 60–63

Anyone who knows me well knows Yoko is one of my closest and dearest friends. I have known her for over thirty years and the way we met was almost fate like. I used to have a thing for Asian chicks (not sure how I got the bug for Orientals LOL), and I was up West End one night waiting for the night bus at Trafalgar Square.

I looked up and saw her boarding a bus. I waited till she got upstairs and motioned for her to open the window so I could spit game and secure the digits. She mouthed me her number, or at least I thought she did, and I went home happy. Next day I called the number and it was the number of the local fire station. I thought, “WTF why would she give me a dud number?”

The next night around the same time I was at Trafalgar Square again. I was a party animal back in the day and was out most nights. So I saw her again boarding the same bus and said to her, “Why did you give me a fake number?” I recited the number and she said, “Nope you took it down wrong,” and then I got the correct number.

I find it weird and almost prophetic I should meet her the next night at the same time as the day before. We spoke on the phone for hours for the next few days and shortly after we started dating. We were on and off for a few years and it was a volatile relationship. She was one of my first loves and I was not used to actually having a girlfriend or being in a relationship. I was so used to, up to that time, just doing my thing, but I was drawn to her. The fact we shared a love of music helped. We went to a lot of hip-hop shows back in the day and I was forever buying her records.

After a few years together she stated she wanted to experience other relationships. I was literally heartbroken and looking back, I think it was the rejection scenario rearing its ugly head that contributed to me feeling like shit at the time. It took me a few years to get over her, but I remember saying, “When we start the record label, I want you to come work for us. One, I trust you and you’re competent, and two, it’s better than the job you’ve got at the moment.” I think she was working at [Lewisham Hospital](#) at the time doing admin.

A few years after starting our labels, and us moving our office and studio to Wandsworth Road she came and worked for us. She was the glue to our chemistry and always was the voice of reason. Mark and I used to fight all the time and even though Yoko and I were obviously tighter. She never took my side because of that. Sometimes it used to piss me off, but I respected her for that.

I remember a few times Mark and I got into it. Our office had a

partition, a hatch where you could lock either side. For two weeks Mark and I did not speak to each other and poor Yoko had to be the go-between and relay messages. As I said, her work rate and organization skills were second-to-none, and most of our events you would see her and Caroline (who was her friend from school) on the door, and she ran that door with military precision.

A few years later when I was buying [Breakin Science](#), we teamed up and purchased it together. Eventually her partner of the last twelve years, Scott a.k.a. Cold Fusion, took over the running of the label when I was at my low point. Scott is cool and even though we bumped heads a few times due to how I thought he was running the label, it's all good I think it put Yoko in a difficult situation, but end of the day we are all adults.

Yoko's mum, Kyoko, is like my second mother and she is so cool, it is a joke. I am glad to have known Yoko for so long, even though she can get on my nerves in record time I think it's a case of familiarity breeds contempt. She is one of the few people I can count on in thick and thin, and she is a blessing in my life.

Chapter 11

There's no Black in the Union

Jack

Pages 64–75

No one really wants to talk about the elephant in the room, and no doubt a few people are squirming whilst getting ready to read this chapter. Do I think there's racism in DnB? Of course, there is. DnB mirrors real life, so the answer is yes.

I remember a few years ago I posed a question on my Facebook.¹ I put up a post saying there's definitely racism in DnB, and Teebee (who is a producer from Norway) piped up instantly and said, bold

¹https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1507691519552428&id=100009347821762, "At least once a day I get asked am I sure I am finished with dnb events etc ...why would I want to stay in a cesspit of bullshit where your race and social background is more important than actual talent I don't fit in today's ideology I have to much of a opinion and don't snort coke with the dnb illuminati and laugh at the stupid jokes. .The racism and classism is to rife,I am cut from a different cloth and will never bow down to the fuckeries that is killing a scene we helped create...", 11.10.2015

as brass, he doesn't agree.² I was like, "Teebee, you are a white dude from Norway, I don't expect you to agree."³

That is like me asserting that I totally understand what sexism is. I have sympathy for what women go through and how they are discriminated against, but as a man, I will never truly understand what they go through. I feel the same way about talking about racism and I made a rule recently not to talk to anyone about racism unless they have experienced it first-hand.

It seems to be a common belief in many people, that you must scream the n-word to be classed as racist. If only it were that simple. Having lived in both America and here, the main difference is that America is more upfront and in your face about it, where Britain tries to be more subtle.

My first recollection of racism was when I was seven or eight years old. I remember seeing skinheads boldly walking around London, with the big Dr Martens boots, jeans which were held up by braces and tattoos on display, normally a national front logo or a swastika. I never fully grasped the hatred shown by the skinheads or the volley of abuse they would spew, especially when they would write graffiti

²https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1507691519552428&id=100009347821762&comment_id=1508072932847620, "Clayton Hines We've had our differences over the years, but always managed to overcome them out of mutual respect. I consider you my friend and I respect you deeply. The racism claim however I actually do not agree with one bit"

³"Torgeir Byrknes you are a white person from Norway, so do I really expect you to understand the deep lined racism in our industry or for you to agree that it's there..I am actually shocked you would make such a flippant statement...stick to making pop n bass obviously you have no idea what really goes on a day 2 day basis...", 11.10.2015

on the walls for “Pakis” or “[wogs](#)”, as we were referred to, to go home. Where did they want us to go? I always wondered. Back to the countries that the British Empire raped and pillaged in the name of colonization?

Speaking of the Great British Empire: can someone please tell me why the queen has most of the artefacts stolen from our ancestral lands in her basement? Apparently, she said, “We,” meaning Great Britain, “can do a better job looking after them.”

It’s funny how people of every other race and nationality in this world are called immigrants when going and settling in another country, apart from the British: when they move and settle in other places around the world we call them ex-pats.

I had situations in the past when I was trying to book certain venues and I had to get my mate (who is white and can put on the best Cockney Wide Boy) to call and secure the venue.

One of the most straight up racist things I have seen was the introduction of the [696 form](#). Form 696 is a risk assessment form which the London Metropolitan Police requests that promoters and licensees of events, complete and submit fourteen days in advance of an event. Across twenty one London boroughs. Non-compliance with this, may result in police opposition to event licenses being granted.

This form has become controversial due to its stipulation that names, stage names, private addresses and phone numbers of all promoters, DJs and artists has to be listed. The form also asks for a description of the style of music to be performed, and the target

audience. It was set up to target the black or urban crowd and many events were cancelled by the police.

We did a big Hardware event on Wandsworth Road with Valve Sound, which was five minutes from our office.⁴ The police turned up saw a big queue of people and started harassing me saying they got intelligence there was going to be trouble. I assured them everything was cool and to look at the crowd, which was 90 percent students and hipsters. They asked me repeatedly what my job was, and I kept telling them I ran a record label and put on events. They just could not fathom that a black dude who looks street put on an event for mostly white kids.

Speaking of the police: an incident which stood out for me, which showed how racist the police are, was when I was living in Thornton Heath with Mark in 1987.

I took the night bus home from Trafalgar Square and the bus station was literally a five-minute walk from my yard. As I get off the bus by the clock tower, within seconds a police van pulls up and one of the guys says, "So where are you off to darkie?" I instantly thought to myself, "Did I hear what I think I heard?" Before I could answer my own question, he says it again, whilst the van is now going the same pace I was going. It was right next to me. I said I was on the way home and the van stopped. Three feds got out, one of them kicked me in the stomach and I dropped to my knees. Another one of them whacked me again, this time on my knee with a truncheon. I let out

⁴<https://www.residentadvisor.net/events/36029>, was held 17.11.2007.

a scream, and they started to laugh. It was 2 a.m. and just my luck, there was no one else on the road.

After what seemed like an eternity, they threw me in the van and had the audacity to search me. They thought I had drugs, obviously, which was a piss take. What made the situation even worse was one of the police was a black dude and sat through the whole ordeal without saying a word. I gave him a look like he was an Uncle Tom after I was searched.

Since nothing was found on me, they just let me go without even a hint of remorse. Incidents like these show you why I hate the police and what I believe they stand for. Not all are bad, but most of them. In my opinion, most of them got robbed in school, got bullied and just swore revenge on the world by joining the force.

My sister's half-brother is a detective in the police force and was telling me a few stories about racism he has experienced. He and his colleague, who both happened to be black, got sent to Heathrow Airport to pick up a package. Even after he and his pal showed his warrant card, the airport officials thought something odd was going on. Eventually, they radioed through to headquarters. Would two white dudes be put under so much scrutiny? We all know the answer to that.

Another similar incident was when I was in Leicester Square, on a Saturday. As usual, we were chilling outside the arcade spot called [Crystal Rooms](#) and the Babylon (or Dutty Beast, as we affectionately called them) came through to try and fuck with us. It was not the

regular police in the tit hats, these were a squadron called *TSG*, which was short for the [Territorial Support Group](#).

The *TSG* replaced the *SPG* ([Specialist Patrol Group](#)), which is a fancy word for police who are called to public disturbances, for example riots, etc. These police were physically bigger, got specialist training and had to pass a special course to join the ranks. We simply called them flat caps, as what distinguished them from the other feds were their flat caps.

They came up to me asking me what I was doing. I said, "Selling tickets." "Do you know its public order offence to do that," they replied. I played stupid and said I did not and one thing led to another.

Within minutes I was handcuffed and thrown in the van. As the cuffs were on behind my back, I could not cushion the fall and fell straight on my face and damaged my nose. They drove me around the block a few times whilst a few of them were resting their boots on my back. I also got a few boots to the chest. They were careful where I was kicked and punched, not to mark me up, so if I did make an official complaint, nothing would show up on the x-rays. The pussyholes were smart. Eventually, I was flung out the van.

My hatred for the feds goes deep, not many interactions I have had with them went smoothly over the years.

My most recent incident with the police was at the time of writing this book, right before it went to print.

I had just left Yoko's house with my friend Ramaaz. We were heading to Rupture at Fabric. I should have known the night would

be trouble if Fabric was involved. I hated the place with a passion and never had a good time there.

We had just hit New Cross when I noticed police lights and sirens behind our car. I asked Ramaaz if he was going to pull out of the way and he said, he was pulling over, as they were after his car.

Once pulled over a police-woman approached our car and asked my mate, if the car was his. Of course she knew this information long before approaching us. The police have a system that pulls up all your information, like, who owns the car, is it insured, is it stolen, etc. I blatantly knew what the incident was for: we were driving while being black.

The officer asked my mate for his license, then tried to make small talk, asking where we had been. I told him, "Fuck the small talk, give her your license and let her do her thing." She replied, that she was only trying to be polite. I told her, I did not care about polite and to just take the license and to her checks.

As we were speaking, she stuck her head inside the car window, she tried to be sly about it, but I clocked what she was doing: She was checking to see, if she could smell weed.

After ten minutes or so, she returned with my mate's license, which had obviously checked out fine, and she proceeded to attempt small talk again. I said, "Listen, give him his license, we've got to go." Instances of racial profiling like this, deepen my hatred for the police.

With society in general, often things are very blatant. Back in the

eighties and nineties being black meant, ironically, no black taxis would stop for you. What we would do was get the white person in the group to stand by themselves and hail the taxi, we would have to hide around the corner. Once the taxi stopped, we jumped out the bushes and all piled in.

It was only a few years back when I was coming from holiday with a few pals and I was the only black dude in the group. We all decided we were going to get taxis from the rank outside Victoria Station. I was so tired and just wanted to get home. When my turn came, as I was getting in the taxi the cockney dude shouted, "I am not taking your type." I asked him to repeat himself and he said louder, "I am not taking your fucking kind." My white mate who was with me felt embarrassed and started to berate the prick, "What does 'your kind' mean?!" I got another taxi and made a point of tipping the dude just so he knows whatever preconceived notion he has of black dudes: we are not all the same. There is good and bad in everyone.

What people do not understand, and what white people don't seem to notice as much - and this all comes down to their privilege — is all the passive racism that goes on right before their very eyes. They may even engage in it themselves without realizing it. Passive racism can be anything from seeing a black dude walk towards you and you suddenly grab your purse tight or you moving to the other side of the road to avoid him walking near you, subconsciously assuming he will be trouble.

I had an incident a few years back regarding this. I was at the

local train station, and I was walking towards the middle off the platform when some older white lady saw me coming and instantly grabbed her purse tightly. She must have been really shook cause she didn't even try to hide what she was doing. After seeing the same situation being played out, again and again, every time I am out on road, something snapped inside me. I went up to her said, "If I wanted to take your handbag, I don't think there's anything you could do to stop me." She insisted, whilst stuttering that that was not the case, but we both knew the truth.

One of the best things about raving back in the day, was the diversity it offered, which was reflected in the music and the crowd. These days, the music is almost as uniform as the ravers on the dance floor. When I go out now, it's spot-the-black-person-in-the-dnb-dance. Apart from the security and toilet attendant, I hardly see anyone of colour. Is it because the majority of the audience wants to see people who look like them on the stage? Is it as simple as, we want to cheer our own? It is only in the last few years I have seen the shift in the raving landscape.

I think back in the early days, like 1998, when jungle was getting phased out, a lot of the black kids stopped going for a few reasons. The funk, hip-hop, reggae and soul vibes left the music and it got a bit robotic and soulless for ravers and producers.

I often wonder if [Mampi Swift](#) would have been white, would he have won one of the big categories at the awards ceremony in the early or mid-two-thousands? I think as Swift was big and black,

ravers often would overlook him and almost say without thinking, “We didn’t expect a black dude to be that good.” It was interesting as soon as [Friction](#) appeared on the scene, he was the media darling as he looked like the boy next door.

At one point it was cool to be black in the scene, but as time went on, our music and swag have been taken by the mainstream and turned into a farce. It reminds me of [gentrification](#), but with music instead of property.

It is very hard to pinpoint a specific moment in the scene where I can say, hands down one hundred percent, that some dude was racist, except for the recent case of [Mistabishi](#) Dude aired his hatred online for the world to see and was rightfully taken to task for it and subsequently had his entire back-catalogue dropped by Hospital Records. It was heartening to see them take swift action to condemn and distance themselves from his vile views, but he is only one of many out there.

We still see racism slowly creeping into the scene from all angles, in various ways. For example: where have all the black producers gone? Is it by design or coincidence that I do not see hardly any black dudes recording music for the big six so-called labels? Then people wonder why I am suspect about the scene as a whole, regarding racism.

Case in point, [Loxy and Ink](#) are my boys, and I truly know for a fact they do not kiss ass, boot-lick or tap-dance to get anywhere. Unfortunately, it seems this stunted their progression. They also

were known as “The Hardware Generals” and that did not go down well with a lot of people.

It has been very disheartening to watch the “De-blackening” of the music and the scene. What was once a scene that was integral to our culture has, over time, been slowly whitewashed, with the influence of black culture being apparently deemed undesirable.

Since the rise of social media, it has been shocking to see the open hatred by some members of this scene. It is disgusting to see the scum seep out from under the woodwork - bigots, Muslim-haters, [Britain First](#), [BNP](#), and [FreeTommy](#) types, all parading around in a scene that was built around mutual respect and inclusivity. DnB deejays and producers spreading “Jah Love,” all the while acting like they’re secretly wishing to pop on a “[MAGA](#)” hat and send a signal to their tribe.⁵

To me, racism is ignorance in its purest form: the overwhelming and irrational fear of what you don’t understand from a personal level. What does not help the situation is — and I see this play out all the time, especially online where the discussion is rife — people who are not affected by racism speaking up and denying that it is a problem. This must stop.

The first step is those in a position of privilege acknowledging that the problem exists. Uncomfortable conversations need to be had and it needs to be approached openly and without being defensive.

⁵More recently Chris Inperspective also referred to such sentiments inside the DnB scene. [DOA thread](#)

For starters, and this is a big one, don't try to tell black people what is and isn't racist. Trust me, if you aren't black yourself you don't have the right to tell us what we can and can't be offended by. If you do not understand this principle, then you might want to take a journey inward to see why you disagree with this.

Yes, all lives matter, of course they do, and no one ever said they do not, but no-one cared until **WE** said black lives matter.

Please understand that racism itself is systematic; all people can be bigoted or prejudiced, but only those in power can be racist.

If you see a black guy in the rave, don't assume he's a dealer. If you do, don't be surprised if he tells you to go fuck yourself (as I do these days).

Please stop mentioning that you have black friends as proof that you are not racist. This proves nothing and we are not trading cards to make yourself look more woke.

Finally, just because you've never experienced it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. And to think otherwise is the epitome of privilege.

Chapter 12

Living the Music

Pages 76–83

During this moment in my life, I picked up my lifetime hobby of collecting music. I was a vinyl junkie and had amassed a record collection that made people envious. All my spare money used to go on buying tunes. I collected everything from rare groove, to eighties soul and boogie, early hip-hop and house.

An ex-girlfriend, who shall remain nameless, sold my record collection and someone broke into my yard in Peckham and took some of my pride and joy. I found out it was Sweet Boy Steve who broke into my yard and took my tunes, I really hope the pussyhole is suffering in hell from that crime.

Pirate stations were a big part of the London music scene and when [London Weekend Radio](#) and a few other stations hit the airwaves, it was a breath of fresh air. [Tim Westwood](#), [Ron Tom](#) and [Derek Boland](#) were the big names on LWR.

During those times the number one sound was Rappatak, who were from West London. The only time we ventured into West London was either to go to a Rappatak jam or to go see Nutriment, which was a hip-hop sound.

Rappatak was probably the first UK sound to have the [Technics 1200s](#) and a selection that stood out from all the other sounds at the time. [Alistair](#) and Co. took their craft seriously and they paved the way for other UK sounds like Tottenham Beat Freak, which was founded by [Mike West](#), better known as [Rebel MC](#). They had [DJ Ron](#) as one of the deejays and they also had South London's [Main Attraction](#), where [Gavin Cheung](#) (aka [Nookie](#)) was involved. There is a vinyl still about which recorded a live, all-dayer from Wormwood Park, which captures the vibe with the whistles and foghorns. That [album](#) really stood out for me and captured the sound of the mid-eighties beautifully.

I lived and breathed clubbing back then. One of the best parties I went to was in 1987. It was thrown by a collective called [Mutuoid Waste](#), who would find big warehouses in the Kings Cross area and turn them into epic sets on the weekend. They would put big robots in the venue, every session was themed and the music playlist was vast and varied. Punk, dub, reggae, psychedelia and other genres were all mixed and blended under one roof. If you're familiar with [Arcadia](#) and those type of events, all of them came from the inspiration of Mutuoid Waste.

People's Club in Paddington was another one of my hang-outs.

Westwood had a residency there, so did [David Rodigan](#) and I saw a few Saxon and Coxsonne dances there as well.

[Gossips](#) in Dean Street (Soho) was also a popular haunt, and it was one of the few clubs in the West End which promoted black music heavily.

One of my favourite clubs I used to go to was [Fool's Paradise](#), which was held in a venue in Leicester Square. It was run by [Simon Goffe](#), who was a deejay on the soul circuit. He went on to manage [Roni Size](#) and a few others. I later found out he named the club after [a big eighties' soul anthem](#) sung by [Melissa Morgan](#).

Each night of the week we would find somewhere to go to after our money-making ventures, and I was buying music like my life depended on it. I had a routine that I came up with for buying tunes: for hip-hop, it was Mr. Groove. If you wanted the USA shrink-wrapped imported tunes that was the spot. Or you had Hitman Records in Soho and the infamous Blackmarket Records. Way before [Nicky](#) and [Dave](#) took it over, I would be down there buying my new jack swing or rap from [Steve Nervier](#) and [Mickey D](#). For rare grooves, I went to the [indoor market](#) in Peckham Rye, which suited me as it was local. Or I would go to Zaks which was inside Brixton Tube Station.

In those days, I was an avid rare groove collector. I would go around the shops looking for the rare albums. To show off to other collectors, you had to have the authentic release. The biggest no-no was getting it on a compilation.

Moondance

Pages 79–83

For years I never really liked [Bruno](#), who was the dude behind [Moondance](#). When I was shotting pills in the late eighties or early nineties, he would never let me or any of my boys in any of his events, especially Camden Palace. He would literally come up to us outside and say, “Not tonight lads,” and we would ask why. He would say, “You know why, you lot are selling drugs in my dance.” Why did the dude not look at the bigger picture and see any good club needed good drugs to make it work?

To make it worse, he had that horrible bouncer from Birmingham called Ivan. I always took a dislike to Ivan. A few years after meeting him I was in a dance in Brixton Academy¹ and he and his three security mates came up to me said they heard I was selling pills. They suggested that I come to the fire exit with them and when I got there, they tried to take my money which they found on me. A slight tussle ensued and I managed to kick open the fire exit and run. No way was I going to give them my money. I was risking my liberty selling pills in the first place and I sure wasn’t going to give that guy my hard earned dough.

Back then it was rife for security to jack drug dealers. They would ask for rent, meaning you give them money to serve up in there and not get thrown out. A few years after I heard Ivan got shot and most

¹Could be this [Moondance Emerge](#), 08.06.1991

people said he was very humble after that. Then again, I am sure most people would be humble if they came that close to death.

I didn't realize how many people he bullied until I put up a post on Facebook telling my story and loads of people jumped on my post telling their own stories of him being a bully.² I do not understand the bully mentality when working the door. You never know who you are messing with.

Which brings me back to an incident at [Astoria](#). The most hassle I had when I was selling pills was definitely at Astoria. A few funny encounters I remember were there was a bouncer called Gary and his right-hand henchman was Chris. I knew Chris from my Covent Garden days and I used to call him "Army Chris", after he joined the army.

Before Chris joined the security at Astoria, he was cool and we'd shoot the breeze. But when he put the badge on the guy morphed into someone I didn't recognize. He and Gary used to try and get money off me for shooting in the dance. Most nights I dropped them twenty quid, as I was making much more than that, so it was a no-brainer. However, each week I would go back, they'd want more and more money.

We gave Gary the name "One Piece" for the simple fact that when I first met him, we both stared each other down and he said, "Do

²https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2203393266648913&id=100009347821762, "Who remembers Ivan the horrible bouncer from Birmingham, who used to work the door for Eastman and a few others, dude got shot in his leg and then started speaking to people with manners, if u remember him and know him dm me please..thanks", 20.12.2018

you want piece?” Chris was a big lump on steroids. One weekend when I went to the club, he and Gary tried to physically assault me. It got to the point they threatened to bar me as they were under the impression, I was making more money than anyone else in there.

There were also a set of brothers that worked at Astoria and [Heavens](#), Kevin and his two brothers, Peter and Noah. They were well-known as bodybuilders and bouncers. We had a ritual where we would go to the big outdoor raves, make our money there, then head to Astoria for the end of the night.

One time I rocked up to the club and I had money in every pocket and in my shoes. They did not like that we were young and making that much dough. One night Kevin even said we couldn’t come in cause we had too much money on us. I think they resented the fact they were making fifteen pounds an hour. And we were making grands. Ultimately, we were doing the club a service by having good drugs in there. I could fill a book with tales from me tussling with security.

I met some crazy characters in my time when I was selling pills. One of the oddest ones we christened “Robert the Rockstar Rapist”. We gave him that name because he had a big wet on his face, which made him look like a rapist. He was a big-time crackhead and that is what we used to call rockstars back in the day. He was the type of lowlife that stole his dad’s giro³ (state pension) and horrible things

³[Giro](#) Pensions in the UK were sent out on giro cheques. See: [This Is Money article](#)

like that.

One funny story I heard about him was with two well-known South London gangsters. He had the audacity to buy crack off them with fake notes. Once they found out they had been rustled, they frog-marched him at knifepoint to their car and as punishment, they blew crack smoke in his face.

These two dudes together were fearless and no matter what part of London they went to, they commanded respect. It just goes to show you how bold and crazy Robert was. The fact he tried to cross those dudes. Even naming them in this book would bring the fear of God to me, so to speak.

Back then crack was a big thing in the clubs and half of the guys who I used to go out and serve pills with couldn't wait to come back to London to find the crack man.

There was a dude called Hammer who was a well-known dealer from South London. He used to make me laugh when he turned up to the club 4 a.m. with his big long [mack](#) on, knowing full well all the cats would be out waiting for him. He would light up the biggest crack spliff and walk around the club smoking it so everyone would know he was there. No lie, it was like the Pied Piper. Once he went round the club smoking his crack spliff all the cats would be following him.

I knew guys who were making thousands on the weekend and come the week they would have nothing left as they'd spent it all on crack. There was this one guy called Tipper and word in the scene

was that he spent four grands on crack in one night. Come morning he was literally on the floor scouring for pieces in the carpet.

I tried crack once or twice back in the day. In my eyes, it is much better than cocaine as you've washed the impurities out. But as it's a favourite of the lower class it has a stigma.

There used to be a barber in Stockwell, South London, who at the top of his game won *Barber of the Year* at the Battle of the Barbers (which was a prestigious Afro-Caribbean event held annually at the Alexandra Palace). He was one of the first dudes I knew that had the [190 Mercedes](#). Allegedly he got hooked on crack cocaine to the point where he would be cutting a customer's hair and would leave them in the chair for hours while he went and found his fix.

I had a short a phase where I would go to Brixton and buy some. It always ended up that I would buy it and be so scared that I'd get caught by the police in the first place, only to get home, take the cling film off and there would hardly be anything in there.

Crack cocaine is a horrible drug that does not discriminate. I am so glad I never really associated myself with anyone who was hooked on it. This drug takes your dignity without a hint of remorse.

Chapter 13

The Birth of DnB

Pages 84–97

Hardcore

Pages 84–85

Everyone liked the [Summer of Love](#) era, but the one thing that was missing, was the UK's point of view. Shortly after UK producers started to make their own mark on the scene, taking remnants of the Summer of Love scene and adding their own, thanks to the likes of [Bay B Kane](#), [Nookie](#), [Danny Breaks](#), [Ellis Dee](#), [4 Hero](#) and [Jonny L](#), to name a few.

Pretty soon the hardcore scene started to flourish. With the likes of [Shut Up and Dance](#) with their seminal classics, it quickly attracted my attention. What helped the scene to grow was the enormous parties that used to be on week in, week out. You had the likes of

[Tasco Warehouse](#) in Greenwich, [Elevation](#) on Lea Bridge Road and also the [Kiss FM](#) Sessions at Astoria with [Steve Jackson](#). It was the first time we could look back and see the music that we listened to was also made by us, which gave us a lot of pride. Labels and producers that influenced me in the scene were [Moving Shadow](#), [Production House](#), [Absolute 2](#), [Formation](#), [Tango & Ratty](#), [Labello Blanco](#), [Ibiza Records](#), [XL](#) and [Rugged Vinyl](#).

As much as we were listening to hardcore, we still regularly listened to our Jamaican sound system tapes and pretty soon the impoverished inner-city kids were putting their take on the sound. Soon you began to hear reggae sound system influence making its way into the hardcore sounds. The bridge started to form and branch out to a new sound.

Leading the way to this new music were [Lennie De Ice](#), [Potential Badboy](#), [Body Snatch](#) or [Guy Called Gerald](#) with their seminal tunes. Other influences bridging the gap between hardcore and the newly emerging jungle sound were [28 Gun Badboy](#), [Shut Up and Dance](#), [Roller Express](#) and [Labyrinth](#).

Jungle Era

Pages 85–91

Many people like to lay claim to the fact they started jungle, etc. One of the guys that must be in the conversation has to be [Paul Ibiza](#), who formed [Ibiza Records](#) and the infamous [E Label](#), and later on,

went on to start the event known as [Jungle Splash](#) (which to this day is still going strong).

Paul is someone I have infinite respect for. I met him many years ago before I started my labels. Mark and I really wanted to do our research before we jumped into head first into the music business. Somehow, we got ahold of Paul's address and one day we both just turned up and knocked on his door. Paul answered and not only did he invite us in, but sat down with us for a few hours and answered all the questions we could come up with. I have never forgotten that day: the dude was so down to Earth and generous with his time. We remain friends to this day and it's all love.

Back to jungle. Jungle origins came from the reggae scene. With the advent of hardcore, UK producers who grew up with the Jamaican sound system culture fused the speeded-up breakbeats with reggae samples, soul or rare groove samples. It was a natural progression from the hardcore era and UK producers felt comfortable experimenting with the sound.

[Terry T](#) (of [3rd Party](#) and [Noise Factory](#)) must get mentioned as well, as one of the unsung heroes of the scene. His crew played a big part in introducing the sound, alongside [Mark Kemet](#) of [Kemet Records](#) and Rebel MC.

From a cultural perspective, the birth of jungle is steeped in the roots of expression for the lower class and urban youths of London. The early nineties had left many young people vulnerable and disenchanted with the broken societal structure. From this, jungle was

born. It was a mirror of the current state of society and was notably different from the other styles of music popular in the rave scene at the time.

Jungle came in dark with a vibe that stood out from the rushy euphoric sounds, which dominated the dance back then. It gained popularity with black British youths who favoured this sound over other popular genres, such as techno (even though jungle was not without influence from these other genres, as well as sounds emerging from the Caribbean).

Jungle was born outside the box and went against the natural ebb and flow of Western music, letting the rhythm take centre stage over the melody, rather than the other way around which was standard in most genres. The sound grew and thrived, quickly spreading through pirate stations and underground networks and clubs.

1994 to 1995 was in my opinion, the height of the era, and when [General Levy](#) described himself as king of the jungle, a few bigwigs took exception and tried to ban him from the scene. Ironically 20 years later, these same dudes are getting dubplates cut of the same tune which they tried to banish him for. [M-Beat](#), who recorded for [Renk Records](#), was one of the most popular producers at the time. He had the underground smash style and the hit [Incredible](#) with General Levy.

Other notable producers at the time were [Ray Keith](#), who was the remix king. With [Nookie](#) engineering his tunes, every tune he did was a classic. Then you had [Shy FX](#) with [Original Nuttah](#) (with [UK](#)

Apache on vocals), Bambaata and Wolf. Other notable anthems were Renegade Snares by Omni Trio, Roll On by Andy C, P-Funk Era by Pascal or Loveable by Dextrous. But my favourite all-time jungle cut is the Studio 2 twelve-inch, which both sides were killers. You had on the A side, Dirty Games, and the B side was just as good a track called Who Jah Bless. To me, that was jungle in its purest form.

When jungle was at his height, the mainstream media (due to not understanding it and wanting to put its own handle on the burgeoning scene) came up with the term “intelligent DnB”. It was a sly underhanded way of undermining the jungle scene. Straight away we read between the lines if that is “intelligent”, then what is the flipped? What is unintelligent then? I still to this day detest that terminology and when people use it, I instantly correct them.¹

There seems to be a so-called resurgence of the jungle sound, but where did it go to begin with? The scene is full of sheep. I know a few deejays, who years ago did not want anything to do with the sound. Fast forward to present and the same fassyholes are taking jungle bookings and are up for awards.

For me, the event that I religiously went to was Roast. Roast was founded by Paul Roast and Wayne; later on, Everton and Kingsley (two brothers from South London) took over the reins. Roast was an event. Girls made an effort to look good and it was a twist on the

¹https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2157897244531849&id=100009347821762, “Will be explaining in my book why the term ”intelligent dnb” in my opinion is offensive and why i screw when people use it #fuckthemedias”, 11.10.2018

Rave culture and Dancehall events that were on at the time. The term that was adopted was, that the girls were looking trash, which is totally opposite of what the word originally meant. It was a mixture of roadman and hot chicks. Champagne was the drink of choice followed by brandy or cognac.

It originally started out at [Turnmills](#) in the daytime - hence the name *Sunday Roast* — then it moved to Linford Studios which was a five minute drive from our studios off Wandsworth Road. It eventually outgrew Linford Street and moved to the Astoria Theatre.

In most people's minds, that's when Roast grew into its own and ravers from far away as Bristol, Birmingham, Cardiff, Manchester, Leeds and Nottingham would come down in droves. Resident deejays were Grooverider, Ron, Frost, [Younghead](#), Brockie and [SL](#). Room 2 was house and garage with [Norris da Boss Windrows](#) and Brothers Glenn. Danielle and Rochelle held that room together, very rarely did I miss a roast at the Astoria. My plot was in the back with the mandem. All corners of London came out for the event and I'm sure crime in the capital slowed down for a few hours as most of the rude boys and hustlers were in the dance. They just wanted to enjoy themselves.

Another notorious spot was Thunder and Joy. Started by [George Kelly](#), it was held in the basement of the YMCA building off Tottenham Court Road and was the regular Sunday spot to go to. Thunder and Joy was also known as the spot where pure roadmen congregated, walk into the dance and in the back was the mandem in long leather

jackets. I think in some ways it was more grimey than Roast. The crack burning was pungent and if you didn't smoke rocks — if you stood there long enough — it got into your system. I think the rude boys brought a certain vibe to the place as well.

At the height of jungle's popularity, trouble started to happen in the clubs. I believe one incident that happened in the Midlands helped with its demise.

There was a night in Birmingham at The Institute. The event was called Euphoria and some Manchester boys got refused entry on the door. All these dudes wanted to do was to come in and enjoy the dance. After exchanging words with the bouncers, they thought enough was enough and ended up coming through into the venue through the windows and rushing the artists on the stage. Allegedly [Micky Finn](#) ran off and left his dubplates on the stage. I do not think the boys really went out to distress the artists on stage. I think it was them letting off frustration as not being allowed in. A few deejays from London refused to go up north for a while, but those kinds of incidents didn't help the scene.

I remember the infamous [Kool FM](#) Sunday round-the-table discussion with [Five-O](#) and [Ragga Twins](#) who interviewed Goldie. What I thought was going to be a friendly chinwag, turned into a war of words. At one-point, Shy FX even joined the conversation.²

At this time some thought Goldie was trying to ostracize jungle from the marketplace. Five-O grilled him on numerous topics, I

²[Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)

remember him asking Goldie about using vocals in the music and if he felt, that was a step backwards. Goldie disagreed and said to the contrary: He felt it was moving the sound forward. He spoke of the importance of progression in the music and how everyone out there was working to cultivate their own signature style. He talked of his world influences and drew parallels to the hip-hop world and how expansion was the natural way for things to go.

Goldie mentioned, there was even chatter that he was making devil music due to his logo, the skull with the headphones. His thoughts in this interview were clear. He was making music that he liked and using his own personal influence to cultivate his signature sound, despite anyone else's opinion. He emphasized, people are entitled to their opinions and that you cannot let everything people say affect what you're doing. I must agree with that.

Techstep

Pages 91–93

3

The founders and godfathers of the **Techstep** scene were **Nico**, who founded **No U Turn**, and **DJ Trace**. We met Nico when we started Trouble on Vinyl in 1992. He joined our camp and went on to en-

³https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2055589124762662&id=100009347821762 “Almost finished chapter in book about the birth of techstep and it evolving into neuro....this is the lineage ,trace handed baton to optical,who then handed it to konflikt,who then handed it to noisia,then it turned to shit...□ #misterrenegade” 18.06.2018

gineer our first four releases. When we moved to our premises on Wandsworth Road, we stopped making tunes due to building our studio and Nico went on to start the now infamous No U Turn record label.

During [Ed's](#) early career, he released several collaborations with Nico that were released on No U Turn. Nico introduced Ed Rush to [Optical](#) in 1996 and suggested they collaborate on some music together. This pairing would eventually be the birth of [Virus Recordings](#).

Around the mid-nineties, Nico and DJ Trace were producing a lot of tracks together. Feeling that the sound they were cultivating did not quite fit the mold of the music at the time, they knew they were forging a progression in the sound. Nico posed the question to Trace, asking what he would call their new sound. "Techstep", he replied. Nico liked the new term. It seemed a neat summary of the sound of the productions they were creating.

A few days later at [Sour Records](#), Nico mentioned Trace's new word, Techstep, as the name they were going to use for some of their new sounds. When he returned a few weeks later to hand over the track, [Check Me Out](#), by himself and Ed Rush. He noticed a stack of tunes labelled "Techstep". They had mislabelled some tunes under the Techstep umbrella and this was when Nico realized, that sometimes it's not always good to share your ideas with people as they'll take it and run with it.

Nico had previously made a tune with Ed Rush called [I Wanna Stay In The Jungle](#), which even back then had his handprints all over

the production. Nico was from Barnes which was in the south west of London, and pretty soon had a team of deejay and producers from the manor, i.e. Ed Rush, Trace, [Fierce](#), [Dom & Roland](#) and [DJ Touch](#) from time to time. Nico, to me, was the first engineer to incorporate rock production techniques in DnB sound.

Another feature of a No U Turn Records was the final mixdown, which was always a live recording of the computer playing back the track whilst Nico dubbed at the desk. Minimal flicks of EQ's and mutes, reverb splashes and sweeping of the bass frequencies were all done live during the final mixdown. Therefore the end of No U Turn records often sound different from the beginning. Things have changed along the way. The dubbing process added a dimension to these drum and bass records, which made them a bit different. It was stated that [Doc Scott's](#) early productions had a great influence on Nico's production techniques.

Over time, many producers began to support the sound, and you had the likes of [Stakka & Skynet](#), [Future Forces](#), [Tech Itch](#) and Dom & Roland furthering the techstep movement.

Neuro

Pages 94–96

In most people's opinion, Neuro started and was cultivated by Optical. The Virus [album](#) is the masterpiece on that sound. Still to this day, 20 years later, it sounds fresh.

I remember when I first met Optical, I see this guy with Dr. Martens and a rat tail. He did not fit my expectation at all. Little did I know this guy would literally shape the future and be a game-changer with regard to the sound.

Other influential producers on the Neuro scene were [Cause 4 Concern](#), Fierce, [Keaton](#), [Usual Suspects](#) and a few others. I really must big up Optical, as he was the true pioneer of the movement. With the birth of any new genre, there is always an innovator behind the movement: for Liquid we had [Bukem](#), for Techstep we had Trace, and for Neuro, the credit goes to Optical.

The true birth of this subgenre came about in 1997 and 1998. It incorporated heavier and harder forms of funk with multiple influences such as techno, house and jazz. The defining moment where the genre split from Techstep into new and uncharted territory is most credited to Ed Rush and Optical's tune [Funktion](#) which was released in 1997 on V Recordings, and on their first album [Wormhole](#) for Virus Recordings in 1998.

The term *Neurofunk* was coined in the [book](#) "Energy Flash: A Journey Through Rave Music and Dance Culture" by [Simon Reynolds](#). Simon came up with the name based on how he perceived the progression that was branching away from the Techstep sound. Simon described the sound as "the fun-free culmination of jungle's strategy of cultural resistance: the eroticisation of anxiety."⁴

⁴"Energy Flash: A Journey Through Rave Music and Dance Culture" Simon Reynolds, 2012, p.362.

One of the problems I have with people using the term Neurofunk now is, it has lost its funk. When today's producers cite [Noisia](#) as their heroes, there is a slight problem.

Modern-day Neuro is too robotic. It has lost its musicality and emotion. The new releases coming out all sound like one big tune and the producers are more concerned with how loud the tracks are nowadays, rather than if they're going to make people dance. In my opinion, the soul has been ripped out and it does not resemble anything that made me fall in love with drum and bass in the first place. When I started hearing the stuff that is being mass-produced and championed in Eastern Europe, it made me realize my love for the music was waning. It is a far cry from where it began.

A few years ago, we got asked to do the Hardware stage at [Let it Roll](#) and I turned the sound down as I couldn't stand to hear that blasting all night. Fast forward to present day and I feel Let it Roll has become a bit more rounded festival that encompasses all the genres of drum and bass.

To me, Neuro had its golden age from 1998 to 2004. As with every genre, things eventually begin to split, with one way evolving the sound and the other becoming stale.

Pirate Radio

Pages 96–97

We cannot talk about the evolution of the rave scene without

citing the importance of pirate radio. Naming some of the essential stations throughout the scene [Fantasy FM](#), [Centre Force](#), [Pulse FM](#), [Eruption](#), [Don FM](#), [Weekend Rush](#) and, for me the most important one, the legendary [Kool FM](#) (founded by [Smurf](#) and then taken over by Guvnor General).

My fondest memories of the pirate radio day were just before we started the label. I used to listen religiously to Weekend Rush, which had one of my favourite deejays of the era [DJ Redant](#), as well as [Remarc](#), [Brain Killers](#), [Shabba](#) and [Fearless](#). I would turn the dial every five minutes to Kool FM, which at the time, the leading deejay on that station was [Brockie](#).

One of the first dances I went to, was a Kool FM and Jungle Fever special. The reason I remember that dance was, when I went in there the whole place was decked out as a jungle. Back then promoters spent time and money on production and doing up the venue. Eastman does not get enough props for what he did with Jungle Fever and Kool FM. The number of guys that he brought through is astounding. That was one of the first events that made me want to become a promoter.

Pirate radio formed a path as part of a cornerstone for drum and bass in its early years. It provided people in the scene a secondary outlet aside from raves, as well as being a platform for DJs and producers to showcase their sound. I often wonder how differently the scene would have developed, if it were not for these stations pushing the sound.

Chapter 14

Creepers

Pages 98–102

Back in the day I had two different set of mates: my industry mates and my mates who I grew up juggling on the streets with. There are many things I regret from that time. As you get older your thought process changes and you realize the full weight of your actions. I am not proud of many things that I've done, but to better understand my life it's important to include these shadier parts of my story.

For a brief time, I used to do house burglary with a mate. We called them “creepers” as usually someone who lived at the home was in. So, you had to creep around the yard. After doing three or four I retired. The thought of someone catching me in their yard did not appeal to me. By rights they should be able to kill you and get away with. You cannot break into someone's yard, especially when they're in and expect a happy outcome. I did not know the first thing about drumming someone's house. I followed my mate's lead, but

I felt madly uncomfortable walking around knowing someone was upstairs. One time we even had the audacity to watch TV and put the kettle on.

My mates who were into those things graduated to doing home invasions. They would follow deejays home, force entry and ransack the yard, sometimes tying up family members. Soon as they got the money and jewellery, they were off. A good friend got caught in the act. Dude he accosted was well known on the circuit back then and every time I see him on road it is mad uncomfortable as he knows I know the culprits very well. I would not say the deejay in question had it coming. Of course, no one deserves that. But back then he was very big on showing his riches to everyone and there are plenty of wolves out there who will do anything to get money.

We also used to rob low-level drug dealers if we got wind someone from country was shotting ounces of weed. We would lure them to London and specifically, to [North Peckham Estate](#). I lived there in the mid-eighties and knew every inch of the block. We would entice them to the estate, rob them and be off. The estate was sprawling, and it was a maze of concrete. If it were your first time on the estate or housing project, there was no way you would be able to find us once we were off on our toes.

This one particular dude from outside London thought it was a good idea not to give up his stash of weed. One of my mates wet him in his leg and eventually we got the belly. That was one of those moments that would be a turning point for me. As time went on, I

did not feel comfortable around that. I was more comfortable talking (“speeching”) dough from someone rather than doing physical harm to them.

Another hustle we had was robbing brothels. Back then most of the working girls advertised their hustle by putting up cards in the phone booths. A punter would call up, hear the type of girl working and go to the house. We would call up and put on a cockney accent as not to arouse suspicion. Most girls wouldn’t allow black dudes to come and visit, excuse the pun.

We had a white boy on the firm who would knock the door and play decoy. Five minutes after he got inside he would say he forgot something in the car and open the door for us to come piling in. The brothels would not report it to the police, as having those setups were illegal.

I often look back and think of the wrong turns I have made in my life and all the people who were affected by my actions. I think of those victims who suffered because of me and I have a lot of remorse.

At the time, I was young, struggling, in desperate need of money for survival and angry at the world. I didn’t have family; I was an outcast. My own parents did not even stand by me when I was struggling growing up. I was an inconvenience to them. Love and compassion for my fellow man was not something that radiated in me at that time. My attitude was that nobody cared about me, so why should I care about them?

It’s a different mentality on the streets. It is dog eat dog, especially

when man's got to eat. I am not trying to excuse my actions at all, but I don't think I'd have gone that way if I grew up surrounded by love.

Over the years, I have been on the receiving end of various crimes and I think of how gutted I was when they happened. Perhaps they were my karma, but they made me connect to those I have wronged and I feel truly sorry for what I've done. I live with the guilt of my actions, and I have tried to let the weight of that change my course for good.

I can honestly say this era was my last time participating in any illegal activities, I stayed out of trouble for twenty odd years until I came very close to being sent to jail again.

Sims

Pages 101–102

Right after the Japanese [earthquake in Kobe](#) a friend of mine got onto a lucrative hustle. Stan Jackson is the name we will call him. I used to juggle with him during the rave days.

The prices of computer Sims¹ went up as there was a shortage of them due to the earthquake. Just like the moped thieves nowadays you had young, organized gangs who would break into offices and take all the computer chips out the computers and sell them.

¹Clayton is confusing Sim-Cards with Computer chips (CPU). A huge black-market for computer chips spang up in early 1995. See: [LA Times article](#)

At first, I thought to myself, “What is dude doing?” It seemed like a waste of time. I could not imagine that the demand would be high enough for the risk and the hassle. After a few weeks though, he had dudes selling him thousands and thousands of sims.

Business was booming. One time he arranged to meet some boys at my studio and told me he was giving them sixty-thousand pounds in cash in exchange for sims. Instantly my mind went back into road mentality and I thought, “I am going to rob these dudes then.” I thought more about it and concluded that wasn’t exactly a good idea, especially when they knew where the studio was.

I was amazed that these dudes, no older than nineteen or twenty, were making that type of dough. That hustle, I think, lasted about a year and my mate made a killing out of it. I was deep in the music by then, but I often wondered how much money and extra side hustles I could have done if I was not so focused on getting the label recognition.

Chapter 15

Wrong'Un

Pages 103–107

Around five years ago I was living in Forest Hill, London, and my mate, who is Arabic, came to my yard and said, “Do you have a loft?” I was like, “Not sure, why?” He said he knew how to grow weed and if I had the space, we could grow some. The next day I checked and, lo and behold, I found out I had a loft.

Within a few days he had ordered some growing equipment, lights and a few tents and within no time he was growing in the loft. I was a heavy smoker at the time and thought, “Why am I paying two hundred and fifty an ounce when I can grow it myself?” The intention was never to sell it. I just wanted weed around me all the time without having to pay through the nose for it.

Within the next three or four months, we grew the first harvest. Just enough to not have to pay for any smoke for a while. During this time, the electricity company sent letters to my address saying

the previous tenant owed money. I ignored the letters as they were not addressed to me, but apparently the electricity company did not know this. I kept ignoring the letters.

A few months later, when I was out, the electricity company forced entry to exchange the gas meter with a prepaid one. The electricity company are one of the few companies who can gain access to your house by forcing entry. No warrant is needed. I came home to find four policemen in my house. One dude was feeding my cat and the others were watching television. As soon as I opened my door they rushed and arrested me. I was arrested for possession of a cannabis factory and was taken away in handcuffs.

What made the situation worse was, I had an event the following weekend. I was running Breakin Science at the time and had to pay the club a deposit. I called Mark the day before and told him I needed to borrow 3.000 pounds. I went to pick up the money from him and returned home when the feds arrested me. It seemed like I was a drug dealer, I got 3.000 cash in my rucksack and a loft full of plants. Luckily, I still had the text messages between Mark and me. As he is a taxi driver and also deals with cash all the time, it seemed plausible. Eventually, I was given the money back after the case.

I was released the next morning and got home to find my yard turned upside down. It was the most stressful two years of my life, as that is how long it took for the case to go court. During those twenty-four months, I hardly told a soul about my situation and I was going back and forth to court as it kept getting postponed.

What saved me from the jail sentence was that the lawyer, a mate of mate recommended. She worked for a big company in the city and I wish I could remember her name to thank her. She was a Moroccan chick who I took a liking to and, off the record, she said to me in a roundabout way that she was clued up. She told me a few things to say and do, to make my case easier.

The prosecution's case was, that I was growing too much weed for personal consumption. They averaged I had to be smoking seven grams per day. My defence lawyer smashed it and got a doctor to a report on me. I had to go to Manchester and visit this dude. He asked me questions for over an hour, and we concurred I smoked blunts with weed in it (a blunt is a big type of joint made from cigar wraps where the tobacco is discarded and replaced with weed).

With that report in hand we went back to court and said I smoke on average three to four blunts a day, each one average four to five grams. The prosecution was left with red faces. Still, the case dragged on and when sentencing was going to be handed out, I really thought there was a chance I could get a custodial sentence.

Eventually, the charges were changed to possession rather than having a cannabis factory. I was ordered to do one hundred and fifty hours of community service and given a one thousand pound fine.

I was scheduled to go on holiday the following wee, and the probation officer was livid when I explained I had a holiday booked. At first, he was like, "You can't go away." I explained it was booked in before the community service was handed to me and we reached a

compromise: I would do forty hours the week before I was due to fly out.

If anyone has done community service you know it is degrading. They make it like that to humiliate you. First, if you are one minute late to the pickup point in the morning you are sent home, chalk up three of those and you will find yourself back in front of the judge. Then you are given these horrible hi-vis jackets with “community service” printed on the back. It looked like an organizational chain gang.

Whilst on bail, I really tried to kick my cannabis consumption as that was the reason I was standing in front of a judge. I took a cannabis anonymous course for six weeks and armed with the certificate of completion and some letters from some industry mates. I think I was spared jail by the skin of my teeth.

Testimonial — Skitty

Pages 106–107

I was well aware of Clayton’s accolades via magazines at the time. I remember initially being shocked that it was a black guy behind this label, putting out this hard, industrial type of DnB, lol. Anyways, moving forward a good few years, and like most of us, Loxy & Ink introduced me to Clayton as I had just started making beats. I remember him calling me whilst I was walking the dog one afternoon, and I was like: “Hello...” “Yeh, yeh, it’s Clayton, this tune

ya dun called, [Fall Down](#), I want it for Hardware...” to which I replied, “Ahhh, I’ve already told Dylan he can have it.” He replied, “Leave it with me, I’ll talk to Dylan.”

He later invited me down to the Hardware Christmas Dinner at some Mexican place. He was giving me this chat about signing to Hardware exclusively, which was the thing around that time. So, he buttered me up by paying for and posting me train tickets. Bless him, haha. I finally get to the restaurant and it’s all good. Sarah (RIP) was taking care of me and making sure I was comfortable etc., which was difficult as I sat with all my idols. As the night was progressing, Keaton had the hump with Clayton about something and started making a bit of a scene. Clayton then storms outside and Sarah, bless her, was like: “I’m really sorry about this, it must be bad as Clayton’s smoking, and he never smokes.”

I never did sign exclusive to the label but became tightly associated with them around 2005, 2006 and 2007 alongside other new breeds such as [Vicious Circle](#), [Phobia](#), [Chase & Status](#), [Gremlinz](#) etc. Clayton began putting out my music and putting me in deep waters by regularly booking me to play at the infamous End parties, which took my name as a producer and a DJ to a global audience. For that, I am eternally grateful to this guy. A gentle giant at heart. Do not be so easily offended.

Chapter 16

Summer of Love Era

Pages 108–121

One of the most fun times in my life was the [Summer of Love Era](#), the golden period between 1988 and 1991. I cannot begin to describe how those years changed dance music forever.

Before those years London was very segregated. I had my black mates that I mixed with and we went to the soul clubs or electro hip hop events. It's only when ecstasy came over from the Balearic Islands (specifically Ibiza) in the mid to late-eighties and people from opposite ends of the social spectrum came together.

I first heard of ecstasy around 1987 when I was up Leicester Square. I would get a few people asking for it, but as I only sold weed and hash, it was foreign to me. When we went to Mud Club in Busbys (Charing Cross Road), that is when it hit home how big a drug it was.

My first time taking a pill I will always remember. I was seeing Yoko at the time and she had some school friends who I became close

with. One day, Bevan and I decided we would go up West End and try to find something to do.

We got given a flyer for a Magical Mystery Bus Tour and thought, “Why not?” We went on a bus which was leaving from Trafalgar Square and all we got told when we paid our 25 pounds was, we were going to get taken to a rave. After we paid our money and waited to see where it would take us, we ended up at Santa Pod Raceway in Bedfordshire, joining about 8.000 ravers.¹

To say it was an eye-opener was an understatement. It was the first time I saw people of all different races raving without any problems. After raving for most of the night, an hour before the event ended, which was 6 a.m., I found a bag of pills on the floor. I ended up taking one out of curiosity, not knowing it took at least thirty minutes to come up and start working. After fifteen minutes I said to Bevan, “These pills are not working” and decided to take another one. Little did I know I would come up a while later, just before the event finished.

I climbed back on the bus feeling all lovey-dovey and euphoric and wondered what the hell was going on. The journey back home took a few hours and I remember turning up at Yoko’s house fucked off my face. She was like, “What have you taken and why?” All I remember saying was that I found some pills on the floor, tried them and I liked it.

After that experience, I was hooked and quickly told my pals

¹It was Sunrise 5000 rave on 20.05.1989.

about how crazy the rave was. One thing I noticed when I went to Sunrise (that was the name of the event) was, how many people kept asking me if I had pills. Me being a hustler and entrepreneur quickly saw a chance to make money. So a few mates and I decided to start shotting fake pills for a laugh.

We got some *Actifed* tablets (which I think are used as a cold and flu remedy), scratched off the logo, filed them down and got a friend to etch the dove logos on them. Before you knew it, we were making dough. Our firm was the first ones to go to raves and make dough that way. We would go up and down the country every weekend from Peterborough to Cambridge, Grimsby to Lydd Airport in Kent. Each event we went to we started to see more London firms and we were glad, to be honest, as even though we were in different crews, we felt a sense of safety in numbers.

Sometimes the security would try and fight us and take our money or call the police on us. I remember going to Perception, which was a big rave up north (when I say north I mean Grimsby). So, I am in the dance juggling, as we used to say back in the day, and four big, hench security come up to me and say, "Come with me." Before you know it, a fight breaks out as my boys saw what was happening and tried to come to my rescue. My mindset was no way am I going to let you take me and then hand me over to the police or try to take my money. We were selling pills for fifteen to twenty pound a pop and used to walk out the events sometimes with one to two thousand at a time. Anyway, it took four of them to wrestle me to the ground.

By then I had managed to throw my stash of pills away in the melee. The head security came up to me afterwards and offered me a job, as he said he was impressed at the fact it took so many of them to wrestle me to the ground. I failed to tell him, the thought of losing my money or my freedom was the reason that I had that incredible hulk moment.

Another time we went to a rave in Cambridge and the security was on us straight away. We stood out like a sore thumb: black guys with baseball caps and leather jackets. We were from London as well and we had a certain swag to us. Anyway, we are not even in the dance for twenty minutes and security comes up to my mate, let's call him Stan Jackson, and punches him, breaking his nose. Back then the security had spotters. They would get an innocent looking raver to come up to you and ask if you were shotting pills. As soon as they got proof, you would get surrounded and all hell would break loose. We quickly got some reinforcements. Another firm that was from London saw the incident and we proceeded to find the security who broke my mate's nose and rushed him. We were like, "You can't just come up to one of us and break his nose, we aren't pussies." Even if we got thrown out the dance, we had to stand our ground.

A year into going to all these big raves, I started to sell real pills as well, but the thought of getting caught was always in the back of my mind. In the beginning, if you got caught with fake pills, it was a slap on the wrist, but then a new law came in called "[Going Equipped to Cheat](#)", which in layman's terms means you knowingly passed on

fake pills. It quickly became a no joking matter when going to raves. We used to have to navigate not only the security, but most events now had police with sniffer dogs at the entrance. You had to have balls of steel to navigate getting into an event and the fact we were black made the police even more suspicious.

One event which I found funny, was when we went to a weekender in Great Yarmouth.² Can't remember the name of the event but we rinsed it as we got there early. That was the key to making dough: get there as quick as possible before the other firms, make your money and chip. Anyway, after a few hours we sold out and decided time to head back to London. As we were leaving, the car that I was in broke down and the police come up to us at the exit. I remember thinking, "This is not looking good." Anyway, I told everyone in the car to keep quiet and let me do the talking. "Hi officer, how are you doing?" I said in my most put-on Cockney voice. I said, "We've broken down and are calling the AA roadside service, who will be out shortly to look at the car." First thing he says is, "What have you got in the trunk?" We opened the trunk and he found money in several different places in the car, for example under the spare wheel and in a few of our jackets. Remember this is eighty-nine, ninety so the police — especially the country bumpkin ones — didn't really have a clue about pills. The police dude said, "Why have you got so much money in the car?" I replied quickly that we were selling air horns and whistles etc. I sounded convincing enough and he

²It could have been [Kaos](#)

actually helped to push the car and gave us a jump start before the [AA](#) showed up.

Pretty soon the rave explosion took off and in London you could literally go out every night of the week. A few early events were at [Clink Street](#), which was founded by the legendary [Danny Rampling](#) and was held at a former prison turned into a warehouse in Southwark. Residents were [Evil Eddie Richards](#), [Kid Batchelor](#), and [Mister C](#). Another night around the same time was [Dungeons](#), that was run by [Rob Acteson](#) and was based in Lea Bridge Road. Also have to mention Mendoza's in Brixton, which gave Grooverider and Fabio their first residencies and [Labyrinth](#) in Dalston, as key events which helped shape the scene.

I had a routine set up by then: I would hit the Park Club on High Street, Kensington, on a Friday. That part of town was dripping with money and the ravers were a mixture of the Kings Road crew from Chelsea, who had loads of dough, and a healthy infusion of regular working-class ravers as well. I remember that was the first time I heard [French Kiss](#) by Lil Louis. If you are not familiar with that rave classic, it slows down in the middle of the tune. After the Park, it was Wag Club, where Tim Simenon (who later went on to record the rave classic, [Bomb the Bass](#)³), and Paul Trouble Anderson were residents. Tim, who Mark became quite friendly with, was the first deejay and producer, who I personally knew who'd had a "Top 10" chart hit and he was very down to earth.

³See above, he is confusing "Beat Dis" with the artist name.

I got quite friendly with the security at these places and ended up giving them fifty pound a night to turn a blind eye to my hustling in the venue. Also, with that payment, kicking out any rival dealers was compulsory.

After a while, no one really wanted to buy pills off any black dudes, as most of the guys were selling dodgy ones. I came up with the idea of finding some white guys who could work for me. I was seeing a Jewish girl, called Hannah, at the time and she had a few mates who I convinced to come out with me on weekends. Before you knew it, Dave and Luke were part of the firm and I also recruited Ganet (another white dude). Don't ask how or why he got that name, but he was a top earner for me.

Soon the dough was coming in and most Sundays were spent with my girlfriend at the time, counting money and straightening it out, as I left events with it crumbled in my shoes, socks and in my balls.

Getting back to what I initially said, the best part of that era was the unity the drugs brought to the table. When you came up on love doves, you did not care what colour or creed the person next to you was. You just told them you loved them and that was that.

Football violence was very rife during that era. You had [West Ham](#) with ICF a.k.a. [The Inter City Firm](#), and [Chelsea](#) with the [Headhunters](#). [Millwall](#) had the [Bushwackas](#) and [Birmingham](#) had the [Zulu Warriors](#). As an unwritten rule, if you followed football, which I did, you rarely went to any match for fear of getting your head split open by the racist, knuckle-dragging, Neanderthal fans.

My good mate Kenny from Forest Gate(who I met many years ago in the West End) took Mark and me to the old Millwall ground when it was at [Cold Blow Lane](#). How he managed to convince me to go, I still marvel at today. We ended up going only to be attacked by police on horses. I took a blow to my shoulder from a truncheon and vowed never to go back.

As racist as the football dudes were, once inside a rave and necking back copious amounts of drugs (for example doves and acid), everything was calm after that. Many a night I would be in [Crazy Club](#), which was held in Astoria (Charing Cross Road) and some random football dude, who only a year ago would kick off with you due to your skin colour, would now tell you he loves you — lol. Speak to many people from that era, and all would conclude ecstasy really helped bring people together during that time.

One of my favourite deejays from that era was [Frankie Bones](#), who was famous for doing those compilations, [Bones Breaks](#). They were albums on vinyl with different break beats that producers either used or sampled. He was from New York and came over a few times to the UK for some live performances.

[Todd Terry](#) was also at the top of his game at this time, alongside the likes of [HMS Centreforce](#), [Ellis Dee](#), Grooverider, Fabio, Jumping Jack Frost, [Nicky Holloway](#), Paul Oakenfold, [Danny Rampling](#), Paul Trouble Anderson, and many others.

You cannot mention this era without mentioning Mash, which was a shop located on Oxford Street in the heart of the West End.

[Bryan Gee](#) became synonymous with the shop.⁴ As you entered, you would walk downstairs past all the skating gear and find all the acid house and rave tunes. You could buy tickets for most of the rave events there as well.

I used to love the way promoters back then used to advertise most events, especially the big ones held in warehouses or fields, or sold tickets at record and clothing shops. The most important part was, that the location of the event was always shrouded in secrecy due to the promoters being worried about the authorities finding out the event location and locking it off. You had to call an information line the day of the event and were given instructions to a location. Sometimes you were told to meet at Clapham Common outside the Windmill Pub and someone from the event company told you where rave was being in held. Once you found out location, it was a frantic drive to get there before most of the shottas.

Every weekend without fail, Fridays and Saturdays were spent on the [M25 Motorway](#). We hardly spent any time in London, as the events where the big money was were in the fields. You had [Biology](#), which was run by [Jarvis](#) who got notoriety for doing a [big event](#) where he advertised [Public Enemy](#) and EPMD were supposed

⁴[Info](#): “Ageing ravers might remember Mash from the late ’80s and early ’90s when DJs such as Bryan G would play in-store sets. The scene died away but Mash kept a following from fans of other genres such as hip hop and drum ’n’ bass. Staffed by some of the coolest sales assistants in London , with a banging soundtrack and sale-rail selling clothes you’d actually want to wear, it has a cult following. Mash, 73 Oxford St, W1D (020 7434 9609) Tottenham Court Rd tube. Open Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri, Sat 10am-7pm, Thur 10am-8pm, Sun 11am-6pm.”

to perform.⁵ For reasons unknown, none of them showed up and the event got a lot of stick and never truly got the confidence back from the ravers. Up north you had Perception and Fantazia. Kent had World Dance at Llyd Airport.

Another place that used to have [good raves](#) was the Rivermead Leisure Centre in Reading. A few stories stand out from that venue, but the one I remember the most was when we went there one night and for some reason we were the only crew shotting in the dance. It got to the point we had to shout to form an orderly queue and you would get seen to. I ran out of pills within an hour and called my mates to tell them to bring some gear, as it's a bayders (that was our slang for saying there's loads of money in the event). We all left happy, each making between a few thousand pounds — not bad for a few hours work.

One time we went to Manchester, Stone Roses were doing an event in Heaton Park. We ventured to Hacienda in Manchester and a few spots in Birmingham and Blackburn. I was very apprehensive of initially going to Manchester and juggling in the daytime, as we saw a few Manchester firms up and down the country and we knew they could have it and loved to use knives when fighting. Anyway, a carload of us went to Manchester that afternoon. The event was jammed, and soon as we got there, people were asking us if we had any pills or acid.

We were not even there for an hour when we saw these boys

⁵[Archive.list](#) and [Facebook post](#)

looking at us funny whilst on their mobile phones. I said to my mates, “This is not looking good. I think we are going to get rushed. Let’s get the fuck outta here.” It’s weird, after going to so many events, you can smell danger. As we were trying to gather everyone up and head towards the exit, we saw this group of guys converge on the hill and start running to us.

You know sometimes you hear stories about people doing super-human feats? Well that was me. The thought of those dudes catching us and knowing you’re definitely going to get stabbed with a [Stanley knife](#) put the fear of God in me — I ran towards the fences. Believe it or not, the police saw what was happening and instead of helping us they tried to close the exit. We all jumped fences and managed to escape the mob. As we regrouped, all my mates said they had never seen me move so quickly. I retorted, “I literally knew I had to make it to safety, or I would get carved up like a turkey at a [Bernard Matthews](#) farm.”

We had so many run-ins over the years with security and police, but the one incident that put me on the path to stop shotting was when I got pulled over by the cops with three thousand pounds in cash and a hundred pills. This was 1990 and I went to a rave near Heston Services, just off the M4 Motorway and made a killing.⁶ Part of me, to this day, wonders why I didn’t stay at the rave and sell all the pills. I would not have gotten pulled in the first place. The second mistake I made was driving in the car with three other black

⁶The Energy rave on 22.07.1989? Or on New Years Eve 1990? [Source](#).

guys, two which had dreads. Without a doubt that was not the wisest choice if you're trying to be low-key.

We were on our way back to London and it was about 6 a.m.. We pull up to Harrods in Knightsbridge and were sitting at the lights waiting for them to turn green. It seemed like an eternity for them to change and before they did, a fed, who just happened to be standing at the lights, motioned for the car to pull over, as the car had no tax disc. As much as I blame the dude who was driving, I was carrying drugs and I should have checked that the car I was travelling in was legit in every aspect.

At first, I wasn't worried, as I had perfected the art of talking to someone. Whether it be police or security, I would maintain eye contact, take whatever I had in my balls out and dispose of it. I had done it numerous times before. The police asked all of us to step out of the vehicle. As he was asking me questions, I looked into his eyes, took the stash of pills out and threw them on the ground. I thought I had gotten away with discarding them, but a policeman who was sitting in the car right behind us saw me. He came running over, picked up the bag of pills and said, "What's this?" I waited for the police van to come and shortly after was taken to Chelsea Police Station.

I remember going back to the station and the officer who made the arrest was being high fived by his colleagues. It was if they had caught Pablo Escobar himself. But this was 1990 and ecstasy was still deemed new. I was put in a holding cell and when questioned later

that evening, I said the three-thousand came from selling whistles and horns and the reason I had a hundred pills on me was, because I was an addict and it was cheaper to buy in bulk. I was let out on bail.

During this time frame I was seeing a Swedish chick, who I met whilst clubbing. Her name was typically Swedish, Eva Thomason. When I met her, I was still living on the notorious North Peckham Estate. Her parents were filthy rich and her father rented her a place in Gloucester Road, near Kensington. After a few months together I moved in with her. Living on the other side of town was much better than the crack-infested estate any day of the week.

Whilst on bail I managed to get legal aid, that means a lawyer who would help me fight the charges. During the first meeting they expressed I might be looking at a lengthy prison sentence due to the number of tablets found on me and there was a highly likely chance the money would be confiscated. I said to them, "I don't give a fuck about the money, I made that in one night. My freedom is more important than money."

Eventually, the case went to Crown Court. The racist pussyhole who was lead detective in my case had the audacity to turn up at my yard that morning. I could not believe it; the door knocked about 10 a.m. and the dude blurted out, "Make sure you are at court this afternoon, as you are looking at a jail sentence." Naturally, my girl started to cry. I told the detective to go fuck himself and slammed the door. I packed my bag with a toothbrush and a few books and was preparing myself for another stint in prison.

When I got to the court, I got the shock of my life — in a good way. I was charged with possession instead of supplying. As, when I got arrested, I told them initially that I was an addict and bought in bulk to save money. They confiscated the three thousand, which was a small price to pay for my freedom, and I got sentenced to one hundred hours of community service. I was shocked upon hearing the verdict, as, remembering the way the fed was going on earlier at my door, I thought there was no chance of getting off. The look on the policeman's face who was at my door earlier gloating was priceless. As I walked out the courthouse he came up and said I was lucky. I replied, "Go and suck your mum," and walked off laughing.

What that incident did, was to show me that a life of crime is not productive and if I didn't find something legit, I would find myself back in that unfortunate predicament sooner or later.

Chapter 17

Starting the Label

Pages 122–139

Whether it was buying records, playing gigs and pirate radio or attending live shows: music was my passion 24/7. In 1993, I took the next step into the industry and started my first label.

A good friend of mine called [Sonia Poulton](#), who I met in the West End days, had moved on to work for [Echoes](#), which was the bible of dance music in the UK. It used to shine a light on all the US imports. They started a hip-hop label called [Go for the Juggler](#), which was based on Old Street. [DJ Pogo](#) was on the label and was part of a group called [PLZ](#). I remember going to the office and seeing the street posters and all the vinyl pressed up. It was exactly how the American rap labels ran their shit. I left her office that day with new vigor. I knew for sure that my career was going to involve music.

The second thing that made up my mind was [Reinforced Records](#). They were a seminal underground dance label based in Dollis Hill.

They'd had a few hits like [Mr. Kirk's Nightmare](#) and a few more underground classics. It was run by four black guys from West London: [Dego](#), [Gus](#), [Ian](#), and [Marc Mac](#), whose roots were from the Covent Garden days. I heavily identified with what they were doing and thought if four black guys from West London can start a label, why can't two black dudes from South London do it as well?

I took a business course based in Tottenham. I was living with my baby's mum at the time and the community centre, where the course was based, was just down the road. The course lasted a few months and I think one of the tasks was to come up with a project. As we were all music lovers, the concept to set up a mock label made sense. Looking back, I was one of the only ones from the course who put what I learnt to good use though. Jason Ellis was a dude who I met on the course, and I still see him out at certain events from time to time. Mark took a music production course in Forest Hill and after a few months, we thought we were ready for the plunge into the murky world of music.

The next step was finding a studio. We found a guy called Trevor Farrell, who was a struggling musician, but he had equipment, which at that time was gold dust. We had a meeting with him and decided we were going to combine our forces.

The equipment would be set-up in Trevor's flat. Little did we know what we were getting ourselves into. For us to use the studio on a daily basis, I had to be at Trevor's flat before he went to work, which was at 9:30 a.m. I lived in Finsbury Park and had to get up

mad early and leave the yard stupid o'clock in order to get there on time. Then we had to stop recording at 5 p.m. when he got home.

[Loot Magazine](#) was very popular at that time. It was similar to Craigslist in that you could buy a house, car or electrical items. And in the back were classifieds for jobs offered. We answered a listing advertising a sound engineer for hire and Nico Sykes turned up. He went on to form No U Turn, which was a trailblazing DnB label.

Nico had come from a rock background and had the long hair to match. I remember schooling him in our music early on when he first came to our makeshift studio. I kept telling him, "It's all about the bass." We played him some tunes which were very big in the early jungle and hardcore era, and he said, "Yeah, I can get something like that for you guys." Trouble On Vinyl was born.

We came up with the name, "Trouble On Vinyl", from Mark and me brainstorming. We wanted a name that people could remember, we thought of the phrase "Worries in the Dance" which was slang for an event being good. "Trouble on Vinyl" was our version of that but applied to records.

From very early on, we knew the importance of marketing and branding and the first seven or eight releases on the label stood out due to the loud, bold sleeve we put the records in. My mindset was, "If you don't know the label now, you soon will." So, the artwork was very loud and in your face.

Our first release was a four-track EP called [Here Comes Trouble](#). Looking back now, I cringe at the moniker Mark and I took on. We

were called the [Bayders Crew](#). That name was slang on the road for dudes who were making money or “bathing in money.” It is not a name I would choose now, but I suppose everyone has got to start somewhere!

The first artist signed to the label was [Kane](#). We met him when we happened to stop in a club on Warder Street. The club was called [The Brain](#) and was well known for their experimental music policy. We walked upstairs and heard a good selection of early hardcore and rave music. We saw that it was a black dude playing and struck up a conversation and that was the beginning of us working together.

[Code 071](#) was also on the EP. Those boys were heroes to me. One of my favourite tracks around that time was [Ah London Sumting](#) which was a certified underground rave classic. I was determined to get them on our first project.

After six months, the working arrangements at Trevor’s flat got to us. Who wants to be kicked out of a session at 5:30 p.m. just as you’re getting into it? Mark and I decided we were going to look for a premise which we could call our own and not have to watch the clock. We knew back then having our own studio was key, especially if you want to find artists and give them room to flourish. No one was the finished article, and we wanted the space to let our artists learn and grow. After a few months of contacting the local councils, a shop front came up which seemed perfect.

It had been an antique shop and the place was a disaster. Basically a building site, but we took it on anyway due to us having the vision

and the hunger. There was no way I was going to go back on the streets and risk going to prison again. It took a few months to clear and gut the place. After many hours clearing the debris and using untold skips, we needed to generate some income to keep us going while the studio and offices were being finished. We decided to open a phone shop upstairs.

We joined forces with a friend-of-a-friend called Daniel, as he was a bit clued up. Before you knew it, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day, I was suddenly an expert on mobile phones. Coincidentally, we then met a dude who worked for Carphone Warehouse who used to “Jim Screech” (take without asking) phones from the warehouse and sold them to us for a reduced price. The dude was a godsend at the time, and we were doing a roaring trade for a few months. It was difficult time-wise to juggle fixing up the studio and getting the artists to hone their production skills. After a few months, the dude who was getting us the phones from Carphone Warehouse got busted and we had to rethink our strategy.

We sat down one day to discuss our future and decided that, if we were going to make it as a record label, we had to give it 101 percent. I can’t remember how it happened, but somehow, we hooked up with a guy called [Tony TK Dramatics](#). I think it was via DJ Kane, whose sister [Vanessa](#) went to a music college. She invited me to come down and have a look, as she said she knew a few talented musicians. I was eager to find artists, so I didn’t need to be asked twice. I went down and met [Justin](#), who later signed to Trouble on Vinyl under

the names [Just Jungle](#) and [Genotype](#). He was an excellent musician who specialized in the steel pan and was also very good at playing keyboards. His tune [Sky](#), which I think was our eighth release, was the tune that put us firmly on the map. It was one of their biggest tunes of that year when we released it and we got support from deejays across the board, including big names like Brockie, Hype and Frost. That was the shot in the arm we needed to see if we could compete with the big boys. That tune announced we had arrived in the major leagues.

Someone who I will always have time for is [DJ Ron](#), as he was the first deejay to play one of our tunes. I followed Ron from when he was in Beat Freak, the sound system Mike West (a.k.a. Rebel MC) put together. I met him at Highbury Islington Station after going to [Music House](#) and cutting a dubplate for him. Not really expecting him to play the tune, I still went to Jungle Splash at the Rocket with a few mates and lo and behold, Ron played our tune.¹ I was ecstatic and to this day every time I see Ron I mention that story to him.

[DJ Red](#) was the next addition to TOV. [Mark O'Neil](#) was originally from Southampton. We met in [Unity Records](#) (Soho) back in the day. I was in the shop dropping off promos and Red was playing [Noodles](#) his demo tape. Yes, I said cassette tape. Big up the [TDK](#) massive! I happened to overhear the tunes and invited Red to the studio. He came a few weeks later with [Devastate](#) and [Mad PLO](#). Red was a very good producer and I think his love of hip-hop helped him choose the

¹It could be [Jungle Mania IV 'The '94 Splash' - 10.12.1994](#)

right samples.

The next artists to join the camp were [Darren](#), a.k.a. [D Bridge](#), and [Jason Maldini](#), who later went on to form half of [Bad Company UK](#) with [Fresh](#) and [Vegas](#).

Renegade Recordings

Pages 128–132

We had started TOV's sister label, [Renegade Recordings](#), in 1994 as an outlet for the jazzier, lighter side of DnB. TOV started off great and had already built up a cult following in no time, but we wanted to keep that sound specifically hip-hop influenced. It made sense for us to start a new imprint to dabble in the lighter, more soulful side of drum & bass.

At the time, the media were bandying around the phrase, “intelligent drum & bass” as they had an agenda against the burgeoning jungle scene. Jungle came from the urban inner-cities. It was too raw and uncontrollable and it was everything the media establishment hated. Renegade's [first release](#) was by DJ Kane. He did a tune which didn't fit the mould of Trouble On Vinyl and so Renegade Recordings was born.

By then, [Shogun](#) was a regular in the studio and came up with the [fifth](#), [sixth](#), [seventh](#) and [eighth](#) releases for the label.²I'd met Shogun,

²Clayton confuses the sixth and seventh release. [Lomax](#) did the third, fourth, fifth and eight release. I've included the correct releases he wrote in the text.

a.k.a. Oliver Lomax, who was one of the biggest up-and-coming producers around at the time, as he went to the same music college as Justin Richardson (Genotype/Just Jungle). When Justin brought Oliver around to the studio one time and played us his demo tracks, we were blown away. I instantly spotted the raw talent.

I remember Oliver being socially awkward and barely saying two words to anyone. But put him in front of the [AKAI S1000](#) sampler and a keyboard and he came to life. At this point, his breakout tune [Just For You](#) was doing the rounds on dubplate and the label was getting heavy support from deejays like Bukem, Fabio, [DJ Lee](#), Doc Scott and the radio boys from Kiss. I want to big up Frost: he was specifically the DJ who really championed the tune. It was from him playing it on his show on Kiss that other DJs jumped on it.

These were the times when Speed the infamous club where Bukem and Fabio were residents, had started and was quickly gaining legendary status (we'll get to that in a minute). We had a ritual where we used to go every week to soak up the vibes and then Oliver would come back to the studio and get some tunes done. Watching him at work was an eye-opener. He loved to record in almost total darkness. Shogun single-handedly got Renegade noticed and soon he was anointed the wonder kid.

Remix offers came pouring in and we linked up with the legendary [R&S](#) imprint out of Belgium. The label was an underground stalwart, the logo is iconic and their catalogue of music is vast. For me, growing up on a diet of dance music, it was a dream for me to be working

with [Reenat](#) and his crew.

I cannot remember the [girl's](#) name who was handling the PR and promo, but we used to go to Miami Music Conference together and as she knew all the techno boys. I got to meet [Kevin Saunderson](#), [Juan Atkins](#) and [Derrick May](#). Those boys were really cool. I was expecting egoville, but they were super down to earth. It is strange as they all were a bit older than us DnB boys and were very passionate about their craft. They were fascinated by our scene and had a lot of respect for its pioneers.

I identified a lot with the black techno boys from Detroit, as it was a scene parallel to ours in London apart from the BPMs being slower. I was a big fan of [Underground Resistance](#), whose main man was [Mad Mike Banks](#). I loved the logo, it was simple but sometimes less is more, and I liked the way that they let the music do the talking. Very rarely did they do press and if they did, they would cover their face for the pictures.

Back to Renegade: One of the main inspirations for the label was the night Speed. Speed, the infamous night started by Sarah Sandy (from [Groove Connection](#)) and Leo. Speed was in its early infancy and was the club that Fabio and Bukem formed and made the jazzier, liquidy, musical side of the scene big. In those early Speed sessions, you were lucky to have more than twenty people in the dance alongside you. Speed was a definite breeding ground for all those who wanted to make those type of beats, which they called “intelligent.” As I mentioned before, I had a problem with that name

and still do.

When I think of the artists of this time, I have to say how incredibly talented [Dextrous](#) was. Dextrous was part of the trio [Solid State](#), together with [Paul \(Phase 3\)](#) and [John](#). Phase and Dextrous used to both play on Kool FM. I think that connection is where they got together to form the trio.

Dextrous to me is a jungle hero. When he was making tunes with [Rudeboy Keith](#) he was on top of his game. Dextrous was a musical genius in my eyes. I call him the [Herbie Hancock](#) of drum and bass. The album that they put out, [The Point of No Return](#), was far ahead of its time. The stand out track taken from that album (which marked a standout point for the label) was the [Marcus Intalex](#) (RIP) remix of [Just A Vision](#), which took everyone by surprise. It was definitely in the “Top 3” tunes of the year and it really brought popularity to the label. No one could have imagined how big that tune would become. When I first heard it, I was in two minds, which is not like me. We did not know at the time that we had a ground-breaking genre-defining hit on our hands. That remix went across genres and was played across the scene. I remembered Andy C dropping it at The End club and I was like, “Okay, we’ve got a hit on our hands.” I am sure we timed it coming out at the beginning of the summer as well; it was the biggest track of the time.

The ethos of the label was always to put out the more musical side of things, but also to put out more up-and-coming artists. Renegade Recordings was an outlet for a lot of new producers who went on to

bigger and better things. By then the label was getting recognition, but with that style of music at the time, it was still tough to do a big night. When we did a Hardware or TOV event, we used to try and put Renegade Recordings in room two. Most of the time it was just as packed as the main room and it showed us how big that subgenre was getting.

Mark aka Griblos aka Mr Para

Pages 132–134

There are many great partnerships throughout history - Lennon and McCartney, Simon and Garfunkle, Snoop and Dre, Mark and Clayton...

I started all my labels with my long-term friend Mark, we met in the homeless shelter (Centrepont in Soho) and came up side-by-side. Mark is a man who likes to be in the background, so I'm going to keep mention of our joint exploits very limited, but he was my right-hand man and my brother for life.

When I first met Mark, straight away we realized, we had a lot in common. We were roughly the same age. Both had Jamaican parents and both experienced the same struggles. We lived together for quite a few years, going from squat to squat.

Being such long-term business partners, we've had our highs and lows and anyone who knows us will tell you that we can certainly rub each other up the wrong way, but Mark is one of those few people

that I consider a life-long friend. No matter how many bust-ups we have had, we always manage to settle our differences and come back together as good mates. I think our friendship has gotten even stronger since we stopped working together, as we used to blame each other over any little issue. One thing I can say though, no matter what, he has always had my back and it's very rare that you find someone so loyal. When we were running around in our Covent days, everyone thought we were brothers. I supposed he is the brother I never had.

I am very proud of the fact that we came up together from nothing and built something that, at the time, we could not see how monumental it was. It is only now, coming out of it, that we can see the legacy we have built. It was the blind leading the blind in the beginning, but through our shared vision we rose and became one of the leading players in the DnB scene. Though I still do not think we quite get due credit for the artists we brought through, and the parties we put on.

While I was the face of the brand, Mark put in just as much work — if not more. Day in, day out, he sat in the office crunching numbers and making sure the financial and business side were correct. Whether we saw eye-to-eye, we always worked as a team. He was the good cop and I was the bad. In any given situation, Mark was always the level-headed voice of reason. He brought insight and balance to everything that came our way. His diligence in the office and clarity in conflicts was an immeasurable factor in our success.

Mark left the music scene around 2005 or 2006 and is now a London Black Taxi Driver. He is happier than ever, apart from the fact that he hates Uber. For all we've been through: the years coming up on the streets to the years building an empire with our brands, to the countless adventures we've had through our friendship and him becoming godfather to my son, Mark has been a true blessing in my life. I am grateful to have such a true friend.

Pure Bliss

Page 135

What a lot of people do not know, is that we had a Garage label. Even though we were known for our DnB, I was a music lover of many genres.

When the Garage scene exploded, I wanted to put out quality releases. I knew a couple of garage producers and ended up working with [Gavin](#), who was half of the production duo called [Baffled](#). Word had gotten around that our studio was one of the best studios south of the river and eventually we had garage guys coming through and making tunes.

MJ Cole happened to come to the studio as he was engineering for someone at the time. After about three or four visits, we got talking. He explained to me that he had never done any solo productions and had only ever engineered for people. I convinced him to start his own production, and we set up a label called [Pure Bliss](#).

The first couple of releases were by MJ Cole under the name [Matlock](#). We had about ten releases by different garage producers. Due to the success of the DnB side of things, we closed it down, but it felt good to be part of the emergence of UKG.

Testimonial — Damone aka Manifest

Pages 136–139

First met Clayton in November 1996, when I was looking for a studio to rent. A childhood friend from my neighbourhood and I wanted to rent a studio. We looked in the Yellow Pages and found a studio near to us which was [Mix Lab studios](#) in Wandsworth Road, Vauxhall. This was perfect for us: not too near to our home in the Brixton area and not too far.

The studio turned out to be [TOV Studios](#) and we were happy because we needed a studio which could make jungle music. We finally booked in over the phone and had to give him money upfront to schedule a session. The day I had to give him the money I saw [DJ Rap](#) coming from the studio and I was very excited that I was booking a studio where legendary deejays pass through for records.

My first session was with Jason Maldini and D Bridge, using the studios downstairs and the Studio 2 upstairs. I continued paying for studio sessions for a while until Clayton and Mark took notice that I was really trying my best to get some tracks done and was paying out of my own pocket to D Bridge Jason & Justin Genotype.

They eventually said to me, that I could use the studio on a weekly basis, as long as I can help out in the studio and did some errands in the office. At the time I was working in West End and I gave up my Saturday part-time job to learn Music Technology hands-on at the studio. Prior to this, I went to Paddington College to Learn Music Technology, but I felt I was not learning enough, so this situation was perfect for me.

Clayton and Mark gave me a platform to work on my craft and learn all the different pieces of technology in the studio. I continued trying to make music at the studio, and [Carl Collins](#) of [Hardleaders Kickin Records](#) heard one of my tracks via [DJ Ruffstuff](#), who played him my music. I got my first track signed to Hardleaders on the [Way out Chapter](#).

Spring of 1998, when the infamous Black Thursday happened, where all the artists left, I went to work at a studio in North London for a few months, which Emma, the receptionist at TOV studios, hooked me up with. I was an apprentice there and got the opportunity to work with [Paul & Phil Hartnol](#), from the Legendary group [Orbital](#), on the studio album [Way Out](#).

I came back to work at the Hardware studio in 1999. Hardware label continued to grow with Clayton and Mark signing a new batch of artists which were Usual Suspects, Konflikt, Loxy and Ink. Around this time, because of the reputation of the TOV, Renegade Recordings and Renegade Hardware labels, people would contact Clayton to book a session at the studio. By this time I had a few releases on the

Hardleaders label, and I produced the [Daylight Conflict](#) track all on my own for the [Quantum Mechanics CD](#), so I was able to do a full studio session with clients. I would engineer for various producers in the drum and bass scene from [Zen](#), [Verb](#), DJ Friction, Loxy and many more. We also had clients in hip-hop, house and garage, who I would engineer for at the studio. I also engineered for the [So Solid Crew](#), who rented the studio on a regular basis. That session was a learning curve. Around this time the studio was making a good amount of money to the point where I was making a decent living from weekly sessions and working for the three labels. Another part of my engineering role was putting together tape packs of the Renegade Hardware nights at The End. I was at the studio for ten years. During this time it became my home, a place where I started my label and distributed the first releases from the basement offices of the TOV Music Group.

I made many contacts, as well as various acquaintances and friends, who passed through the studio, and have gotten work via production and various DJing gigs across the UK & Europe. I came up with the [OG Returns](#) track, which initially [Hive](#) at [Violence Records](#) wanted to sign, but due to me mixing the track at the Hardware studio it was only right to give it to Clayton or I would have had to pay a studio fee. From there I was given more gigs at the infamous Hardware Nights at The End and released an [EP](#) on the Hardware Label.

I met Clayton and Mark when I was twenty years old. They took

me under their wing and for that, I will always be grateful to them. I learned so much knowledge from the studio days. I was not a knucklehead, but I was a kid that could have been in the wrong place at the wrong time. Clayton and Mark taking me on as an apprentice probably changed my direction in life and helped me to focus more as an individual. That is why I will always have respect for Clayton and Mark. I don't have a big family, so I really looked up to them as my big brothers, and the people at the studio were like family. I have had my ups and downs with Clayton over the years just like many in the scene. The way I describe my relationship with him is like a cousin you bump heads with from time to time and argue, but he is like family. I suppose when you spend most of your life around someone and share many memories and experiences you become family for life.

Chapter 18

I'm Vegan Now

Pages 140–194

Friction

Pages 140–148

I met [Ed](#), who would become known as [DJ Friction](#), back in the early nineties. He used to call the office to see if we wanted to advertise in his fanzine called, [Informer](#). It was a small black and white magazine which was trying to compete with the more well-known titles, [ATM](#) and [Knowledge](#). It was filled with drum and bass news, rave listings and that sort of thing.

I have got to say, the dude was persistent. He stayed on our case trying to get us to advertise for months. Finally, we gave in and over time we struck up a friendship, with him coming down to the office a few times to check us.

In the early days, we knew him as a budding deejay and producer who used to hang about with this guy, Marshall from Luton. Pretty soon after that, Friction started to make tunes with [Skinny](#), who was a shit hot engineer from the south coast.

As far as I was concerned, we had become good mates and we would call each other up and have long conversations where we didn't discuss drum and bass. Ed was a very good deejay and I quickly started to put him on every line up I did, especially when we started our TOV monthly event at Coliseum in Vauxhall. I cannot tell you how many times I would call him late on a Saturday night asking him if he could stand in for a deejay who was double-booked and could not attend the event.

In a short span of time, Friction was blowing up. I was glad as I thought we were pals and I was happy to see him doing well. Pretty soon, he had a few tracks out on Trouble on Vinyl and Renegade Hardware and was starting to get booked on the rave circuit consistently.

Even back then though, a few of my boys had doubts about him. They were like, "Why are you bringing him in so much," questioning why I was putting him on every event like I did. I simply said that he was my boy and also a good deejay, that he just needed a platform to shine. But things started to go pear-shaped with him and me.

It started to go downhill when Obi, who runs [Echo Location](#) (which in my opinion is the biggest agency out there when it comes to DnB), hit me up, as he knew I was good pals with Ed. Obi wanted me to

convince Ed to join Echo Location. Unique Artists had just disbanded, and a lot of artists were now up for grabs. I had a good relationship with Obi, as we were in discussion at the time about him and [Jho Oakley](#) coming on board with my [Code Of The Streets](#) project (which was a DVD magazine that I had started). I called Ed and said to him there was no point going to [Coda](#), as Andy C was over there and Ed would always play second fiddle to him. After a few phone calls back and forth, Friction agreed to join Echo.

Yet again, I was really happy for the dude. It is nice to see your good mates do well and Echo was gaining momentum with their recent signings of Chase & Status, Pendulum, Hype, Mampi Swift, Grooverider and a few other heavy hitters to the agency. It was a good look for him.

Literally a week after Friction signed with Echo, I called Obi and said to him I wanted to book Ed for a Breakin' Science event I had coming up. I had purchased the Breakin' Science brand about a year before and was in a unique position that I do not think anyone has been in before or since. I was promoting and owned one of the biggest jump-up brands and was running the legendary Renegade Hardware imprint simultaneously. How many people can say that? Anyway, when Obi asked me about Friction's fee, I was like, "I will speak to Ed and get back to you once we have agreed to a price." Obi replied back with, "No, I will tell **YOU** what the fee is."

I was a bit taken aback, and really expected Friction to man up and say to Obi that he would deal with me as I was his pal and also

the reason he joined the agency in the first place. I thought Ed and I would agree to a price and then he would go and instruct Obi. Nope! The spineless wanker didn't interject in mine and Obi's squabble. He just stood there and watched us go back and forth. Shit got heated and I threatened to turn up at Obi's office with a baseball bat. I got told the police would be called if that was the case.

My initial reaction was that of shock and anger, but it went deeper than that; I thought Ed and I were good mates prior to this. I always helped dude out as much as I could to help him push forward. The way he turned his back on me at that moment left me feeling used.

Another incident, that showed that dude is a fassyhole, was when I agreed to put him as the headliner for Breakin Science. Hype called up and started bitching as I had promised him the headline slot previously. In my opinion, Hype was the bigger artist at the time, so I decided to go with him. Now, instead of Friction calling me like a man and as a mate, he instructs Obi to say that he is busy and could not make the next few events (as payback for giving Hype the headline spot). It was only later on when we were talking on the phone that he dropped on me how pissed he was due to me not sticking to my end of our bargain.

Over the next few years, our relationship deteriorated further. Dude had a new circle of pure "yes-men" around him, gassing his head. I think I was the only person who was not kissing his ass at the time. You know those guys who suddenly have a new set of friends and you are like, "Hold on, what happened to your day one dawgs?"

It started to become clear that real friendships were expendable to Ed if they stopped serving as a steppingstone. When our friendship began, most of Friction's mates were black. As time went on his entire circle was swapped and whitewashed. I often wondered if that was coincidence or if there was more to that.

Don't get me wrong: dude was a talented deejay. But in my opinion, he copied his whole style from Andy, right down to the movements behind the decks, the trademark baseball cap and of course the mixing style. It was like looking at a lesser carbon copy. Personally, I would hate to bust through a scene and all people were saying was that I was a clone.

It was always about Andy though. It really seemed like dude had a borderline obsession. I remember one year at the DnB awards, I think he really thought he had a shot at winning. When Andy won one of his many best deejay awards, the look on Ed's face was priceless. He was crestfallen.

Eventually, another year when Andy was winning, Friction was given a token "Lifetime Achievement" award. What did dude do to win a lifetime achievement award? You have been in the game for a hot minute and you're getting lifetime achievement awards? His manager at the time worked closely with D&B Arena, who organized the awards and so that's when I knew shit was fixed. That camp had to rub dude's ego and let him win something.

In time — I think he realized, he couldn't catch Andy to become the biggest dnb deejay — there was a shift and he started to make

UK bass, and teamed up with [My Nu Leng](#).

The moves he made just came across as desperate. Most producers I have spoken to over the years have said he can't really make tunes and relies on collabs. Allegedly he has had ghost producers on numerous tunes.

There was one time we really got into it on the phone. We were discussing him playing at one of my events and he started to talk sideways and had the audacity to say to me that, "Friendship and business do not mix." I was astounded and I reminded him of one time when we were in Miami at the Winter Music Conference and he'd asked me to send money to his missus to pay the mortgage. Apparently, it was OK for business and friendship to mix then. What it seemingly amounted to was, business and friendship didn't mix unless he was the one to solely benefit from it. His ego couldn't handle it any other way. I ended up going to his wedding, but by then I realized that we had definitely drifted apart.

There were a few times where I had to have his back from him pissing people off with his newfound arrogance. I remember he did something to piss off [Eastman](#) and Brockie and they wanted his blood. I spoke to [Brockie](#) and said, "You can't touch him, that's my boy". Even then I still had his back.

Then I began to see interviews with dude where he was asked who brought him through and he always used to mention [Zinc](#) and [Dillinja](#). That one stung. I thought, "Where were Zinc and Dillinja when I was booking you on the Hardware and Trouble on Vinyl

events, and putting out your second-rate tunes, as you were like family and I wanted to give you shine?” I should have known the dude was a shitcunt from the way he handled Skinny, who was his production partner in the beginning. The guy had a plan and was willing to step on anyone and do anything necessary to get to the summit. It didn’t matter how good of a mate they were or how much they did to help him succeed.

Two main instances bought a final curtain down on our friendship though. I booked him for our brand’s eighteenth birthday at Electric Brixton¹ and his agent at the time, [Fran](#) the Wasteman (as I call him), who worked for [Primary Talent](#), said he wanted Ed’s name first on the flyer. In my eyes that was cool. He was still my boy, so I thought that’s a minor. Fran asked me to send him proof of the flyer, which I did not do. It is my event and my money, so my attitude was, “Unless you’re bankrolling this event, you ain’t seeing shit.” Anyway, to cut a long story short, Fran eventually saw the flyer and hit the roof saying, “I am glad Friction’s name is first, but we wanted it a bit bigger than everyone else’s.” Once again, I was astounded and thought, “What an egotistical prick! Now having your name first is not enough, it also has to be bigger than everyone else’s?”

I remember after his set him going into his van and getting his tour manager and fluffer to come ask for his wages. I was like: “Why can’t Ed come up and talk to me?” It got all political as dude thought

¹<https://www.residentadvisor.net/events/547216> It’s not the 18th but the 19th birthday.

he was the [Tiesto](#) of DnB.

The final straw with him and me was when I called him up and asked him to play at the Coronet Final Chapter event. The idea was I was going to put together an all-star lineup with all the deejays and producers who I had helped build over the years. We had started talking about him playing months before the actual gig and even then, the response was not what I wanted to hear.

When we announced the gig and it sold out within a week, I still wanted him to play. It was not about his name putting bums on seats, I just wanted the best and biggest line up I could get.

A few weeks before the event, we spoke again and discussed fees. I was like, "You've got a gig in Southampton, so come to me after and do the 4 to 5 a.m. set. The most I can give you is 1.500 pounds." The dude straight said that the offer was cool but, "...why can't you put me down as a special unannounced guest?" I was like, "Chase & Status are already the special guests on the night. You are camp and supposed to be crew, so I'm definitely not giving you the Tiesto treatment."

It really made my blood boil and he capped it off a week later by coming back and saying he can't do the gig due to Fabric having a booking policy of not playing in London for eight weeks on either side of a show you played at for them. He said that he was not looking to piss off Fabric, his agent or his management. I replied, "So you don't mind pissing me off though, the dude who bought you through."

A week later his agent called and said that Ed would like to do

the show now and that they had managed to move things about. By then though, I had enough of his bullshit. I was not standing for him treating me as if he was doing me a favor. The dude's ego couldn't take the fact that the show wasn't all about him. I thought that just for one night, he would come and be happy to be a part of something that he had helped to build.

I have seen him part with a lot of people who helped him achieve his success and ultimately, it appears, he is one of those dudes that are career driven to the point that he is willing to step on whoever it takes and sacrifice any friendships to get to where he wants to go.

Goldie

Pages 149–151

Goldie and I bumped heads a few times over the years. I first bumped into him during 1992 or 1993, when Tasco Warehouse used to be happening on Creek Road, Greenwich every weekend. That was my rave. Very rarely did I miss one. It was in the manor and the music was banging. I also used to make dough in there.

Goldie was carrying Randall's record box back then and was a loud, animated figure. His accent was full on and to be honest, I found it hard to understand him. I always used to catch the end of his sentence and just nod.

The first incident was when [DJ Bailey](#) called him up and said that I was bullying him. What a fassyhole. Bailey told my girlfriend at the

time that I was cheating on her, so I confronted him at Metalheadz when it was in Dingwalls and told him to come outside so we can settle it like men — have fisticuffs, or as they say on the other side of the pond, “have a fair one.” Bailey, being the pussy that he is, calls up Goldie whilst he was in Australia and hands the phone to me. I am like, “Mate, I beg you keep out of this as you don’t know the full story.” We will get more into this soon.

I remember the second incident like it was yesterday: I was on the way to Music House to drop off some DATs for the boys to cut dubplates from. My phone rings and when I answer I hear Goldie literally screaming down the phone, “Fucking this, fucking that.” Eventually, I decipher that he is asking me why I am doing an event on the bank holiday Sunday at The End club. First thing I said was, “Who the fuck are you, do you own Sundays?” Metalheadz was going to be at Limelights on Shaftesbury Avenue on the same bank holiday Sunday as I was doing the Big Rewind.² Then he said a line which, I have to admit, got me really irritated. He said, “Have you stopped throwing your toys out the pram,” which made me flip even more.

A few weeks before, Goldie was in the [national paper](#) for smashing some dude in the face with a record box. I think that the dude had allegedly touched up Goldie’s girl at the time. The incident was at the Café de Paris, Headz Sessions. I reminded him that I am not that dude and he could not expect to put a finger on me and not have

²I’m seriously confused, Metalheadz moved to Limelight 20.05.2001. The Big Rewind Events took place in 2000 (May and August) He is confusing the move with something else.

some repercussions. The conversation was left with the threat that when he sees me next, he was going to do something to me, and I was like, “Fuck you, when I see you, I’ll **SEE** you.”

I remember DJ Ron and MC GQ called me and tried to talk sense into me over the following days, but my attitude was that I am not a bad man. But I’ll be damned if I am going to let anyone take liberties with me and talk about putting hands on me just because I happen to have an event the same day. I didn’t know when I booked our event that Metalheadz was going to be on the same night. Also, this is London, which is the epicentre of DnB raves and very rarely can you have the calendar to yourself.

Three or four months later I walk into Mass, Brixton and I see Goldie. I was with Loxy and Ink and almost started to take off my jacket and jewellery as I thought it was going to be an instant scuff. I was remembering his words of when he sees me, he is going to fuck me up. He came up to me and put his arm around me and said, “Have you calmed down,” to which I then replied. “Have **YOU** calmed down?” The tension was defused as Giles and Andrew knew Goldie way better than me and they were my boys.

On the rare occasion I see Goldie nowadays, we shoot the breeze. It is all good now, but that situation could have gone left very quickly.

Bukem

Pages 151–153

The Bukem incident revolved around him literally stealing one of our artists. Shogun, a.k.a. Oliver Lomax, was a producer from Watford, which is the same town that Bukem was from.

I knew Shogun respected Bukem as a producer obviously, but I did not realize he looked at him as a demigod. As previously mentioned in this book, Shogun had successfully helped get Renegade Recordings on the map and was putting out several notable tunes. One day he says to me that Danny Bukem had contacted him and wanted to sign a few tunes for a compilation he was doing. I was like cool. That's good exposure for the label and for Shogun, but the cynical part of me thought that this was Danny's way of trying to poach Oliver. Eventually, I was like, "Give him the tunes." The last thing he wanted to hear was a no, as, like I said, he worshipped Bukem.

A few months later, whilst we were discussing an album with Shogun, he drops the bombshell: Good Looking wanted to sign him and the deal was for one pound.

The next day I call Bukem and I'm like, "What you doing? You know Shogun is our artist and we spent blood sweat and tears getting dude this far. Why are you poaching him?" He replied that it was Oliver who contacted him and that kind of thing.

So, I hatched a plan with a few of my boys, who were not in DnB, but they were road. Their main thing to make was to raise, extort and kidnap people and fling them in a boot of a car. I was livid! The man was not just going to take our artist like that. I thought, "How would this situation get resolved if this was the real world? Take

legal action or snatch him off road?” I found out Bukem was playing in Oxford in a few weeks and thought when he was coming out the club, rush him and fling him in the car.

Literally two days before the gig, Mark, who was always the voice of reason was like: “We can’t do that. It will resonate through the scene and we’ll be ostracized from everyone.” It was frowned upon to use violence and all the hard work we had put in would be undone. I thought about it.

The last few years we had grafted and all three of our labels were on fire. Why throw that away in a moment of madness? That incident made us determined to lock our artists down. Up until then everything was chilled and we assumed everyone was cool and we were all working towards the same goal.

Bailey

Pages 153–159

After all these years I sometimes wonder, what does Bailey say if anyone ever asks him why we do not speak anymore? Does he fess up that he is a snake who stabbed me in the back or does he lie through his teeth?

I met Bailey like I met most of the deejays back in the day, from just going out to clubs. I was a club whore and would go out to every DnB event. It was a good way of networking. At the time the label was not well known, so going out most nights was me doing promo.

We found out we had a lot in common, especially the love of music and girls.

We quickly built up a friendship and he would be down at the studio or we would be around each other's houses all the time. As we were mates, he got our music first. Every label back then unofficially had a deejay who would premiere their releases and Bailey was ours. Our girlfriends at the time even joked we were gay lovers, as we were constantly together.

A few years later we met two girls who were best mates and ended up hooking up with them. Both were from the south coast (Southampton) and were public school educated. Their parents had dough and bought them a house in Ealing, West London. Pretty soon it became the hangout spot, as Lox and [Aaron](#) (from [Universal Project](#)) started dating their friends as well. [Keaton](#) (from [Usual Suspects](#)) also knew the chicks, as they all grew up in the same area.

Around this time, I also started dating this black chick. I linked her via some girl called Catherine, who Bailey was messing with at the time. Deon was pretty as hell. She reminded me of the main chick in the Jay-Z video [I Wanna Love U](#). But you know what comes with pretty light skinned chicks? Trouble! We fought like cat and dog. She thought just her looks alone would take her far and I think what she liked about me, was that I was no-nonsense. Even though she was a head-turner, I put her in check constantly.

Anyway, the incident that led to me not speaking to Bailey for almost twenty years is this: I used to do themed Christmas parties.

All the DnB deejays for that night would showcase all the genres that influenced them, playing anything apart from drum and bass.³ So, the night was popping off and the place was packed with a nice ratio of female to males. Amy comes up to me at the bar and says nonchalantly, “I hear you’re still seeing Deon.” I was thinking, “Who the fuck told you that?” Only three people she knew would have known about that. I quickly dismissed it and said it was not true.

I was caught off-guard by her comments though and tried to make sense of who could have told her. I went up to Loxy and Ink and asked both of them whether they’d told Amy I was seeing Deon. They said no, so that left Bailey. I asked him and he said no, so I went outside with Amy and questioned her. She told me it was Bailey who told her, and he had also said in the same conversation that he’d liked her for ages.

I was stunned and, to be honest, I was hurt. This was a dude who, at the time, had six chicks on the go. Me being his mate and respecting the general man code of keeping quiet about him fucking out on his missus, never mentioned anything to his wifey. I was still trying to process the Judas behaviour. Up until mere moments ago we were close mates and he had my full trust, now he’d pulled the rug from beneath my feet.

Initially, there was pure disbelief. I asked Amy if she was sure it was him who had told her. She confirmed it again. Of course, I asked

³I don’t know which party this is, but Bailey played at RH events until 1999. So I guess this all happened in December 1999.

him again and he denied it. The feeling of betrayal was sickening. Not only had he gone behind my back and dropped me in it with Amy and then tried to chat her up, he was standing there lying to my face about it, knowing I knew what he'd done.

The thing is, IF he had owned up right then and there maybe our friendship could have survived. I might have put it down as a very bad choice in a drunken moment. But drunk or not, you do not go up to your mate's girl and expose the fact he was cheating on her and then use that moment to try and make your move on her.

This all happened on a Thursday night. The following Sunday I went to Dingwalls where Metalheadz had their residency at the time. [Until Christmas 1999.] I had stewed on this for days, all the while trying to smooth things over with Amy. Naturally, she was very upset and things were not good between us for a time.

The more I thought about the situation, the more it stung. In my head, I kept thinking back to how tight I thought we were and how much trust I put in dude, for him to stab me in the back like that was unforgivable. I could not let it go, we needed to settle this.

I saw Bailey at Dingwalls and said to him, "Let's go outside and deal with this like men." I wanted to have straight fisticuffs and pound his head in. The betrayal and dishonesty left me baffled. All this time he was a snake disguised as a mate. Unsurprisingly, he declined to come outside.

As I mentioned previously, he instead decided to call Goldie who, at the time, was in Australia on tour. Goldie and I exchanged words.

I thought, “What a pussy, who does that? Who calls a dude on the other side of the world like that? What was that going to do?” What a coward. His refusal to confront the issue and me not being able to deal with him added to my growing anger.

Amy and I eventually worked things out, but it had scarred the relationship. You may be thinking that I got a bit of karma for doing the dirty on her and you are right... in part anyway. My dishonesty with her was something I am not proud of and I felt very bad for hurting her. I was no angel in this situation and that is another point entirely, but I don’t believe karmic retributions should be dealt at the hand of one of your best and most trusted mates, solely for the purpose of him poaching your girl and adding another notch to his bedpost.

There is an old [proverb](#): “The enemy of my enemy is my friend”. Well, in this case, the opposite was true — the friend of my enemy was my enemy. Anyone who I saw Bailey hanging out with, I instantly put on my enemy list. My philosophy was, if you stand by my enemy, you will get hit by stray bullets.

Two people who fell victim to this, were [Darrel \(Invaders\)](#), and Chef (Kool FM). Whenever I saw them out, I used to give them screw-face. I remember one particular year in Miami, Darrel, [Breakage](#) and I almost got into it, due to my hatred for anyone who used to knock about with Bailey. Years later, I got to speaking to them all and I realized they were actually cool guys.⁴

⁴https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2258269737827932

That is how deep my hatred ran. Anyone in his vicinity was susceptible to it. Obviously today I do not hold anyone accountable for his actions but him. But it took a while to get that clarity. My loathing of him runs deep.

For years after I would see him out at various events and most of the time I would leave, as I knew that if I stayed, I would probably get into a physical altercation with him. The feeling of betrayal never went away and still remains to this day. I was told by everyone I could not beat him up, as it would affect my brand and that frustrated me even more.

The hardest pill to swallow was, how skilled dude was at making out to everyone in the scene that he was cool. I found out later from a few of the [Inta](#) crew, he used to knock about with that he had trouble previously for doing the same shit to other people; going up to his mates' girls, who he knew were taken, and trying to speech them.

Things came to a head when I had a dream that I was in a club and he went up to Yoko and was trying to have chit with her. All I remember from the dream is, that I was punching him up to near death. When I told everyone about it at work later, they all told

&id=100009347821762 “The saying never judge a book by its cover is so true,i never used to fuck with dude as he used to spar with that fassyhole bailey and if you read my book u know how i feel about that special breed of wasteman,for years we crossed paths and no words were exchanged,then my mate who is not even remotely in the scene told me he was good people,so i started to fuck with him,turns out he is one of the scenes nicest dudes and now i consider him a close friend,many times when i have been frustrated he is the voice of reason,few dudes have alot to thank him for ,wanted to punch up a few dudes and he has talked sense into me,anyway forget all that,want to say to Shaf Khan aka dj chef have a splendid birthday and on friday we will share a few drinks..#blapblap....”

me that I needed to let it go and that the hatred was consuming me. Letting go is easier said than done. I am from the old school train of thought. If you have beef with someone, settle it with fists. I guess the fact I could not cave his face prevented me from moving past it.

Often, I would see him out and look straight through him. I've had countless people come up to me over the years and ask whether the beef can be settled, and my answer was always, "No fucking way!" I expect to beef with people in business. That's life and I accept it. But when a so-called friend shits on me from a great height, I take great offence.

When The End club was shutting, Fabio had a Swerve closing party (Swerve was his midweek event that played liquid DnB).⁵ The club was packed and at the end of the night someone suggested a group photo. Bailey comes over and tries to join in the picture and put his arm around me. I instantly removed it and walked off. Rather than I punch him up in the dance and start the "Clayton is being Clayton" brigade chatting shit, I just moved. I wasn't going to disrespect Fabio's dance.

Bailey got his karma in the end from all that. As when we were friends, he got most of his gigs from me. As soon as I stopped booking him most of his work dried up. He eventually got a gig on [1Xtra](#), but that is because he was sleeping with a few chicks up at the station.

⁵<https://www.residentadvisor.net/reviews/5851> Sat. 24.01.2009.

Maztek

Pages 160–161

[Maztek](#), a.k.a. [Matteo Cavo](#), joined the Hardware camp when Scott (Cold Fusion), was running the label in 2012. I had decided, that I had enough of running the label and my passion for the music was at an all-time low. Cold Fusion was immersed in the music and the new beats at the time, which, for me, signalled the beginning of the end.

I handed the reins over to him and Maztek was the first artist signed to the imprint under new management. I was never a fan of his music and if left up to me, we would have never signed dude. But as I relinquished control, I didn't have much say in what the label put out. I cannot tell you one Maztek tune from the Hardware catalogue. It all seemed way too noisy and cluttered up. Producers from that era were more concerned about how loud the tunes were, compared to having soul, melody and funk in the tune. It is blasphemy to call those tunes Neurofunk, as there's no funk in them whatsoever.

Whilst Maztek was on the label, I barely spoke to dude. I booked him for the events and we said hello or goodbye. I often wondered if he was quiet because of his lack of English or if he was just rude. Eventually, when we fell out and he cussed me on social media, his English seemed fine.

He became popular with the new wave of ravers as that whole

Eastern European sound became more and more prominent.⁶ As per usual, when a producer becomes big people start to blow smoke up their ass and their attitude changes. Little by little I noticed it happening until things finally reached a head.

We organized to do a show in Holland with a Dutch promoter. Maztek threw a hissy fit and insisted to the promoter he needed to be top of the lineup. The news got back to me and, obviously, I took him to task. Man has been part of the camp for a quick minute, and there he was acting like Charlie Big Bollocks. Anyone who knows anything about the label and the hierarchy knows “The Generals” and the faces of the label are Ink and Loxy. I am sure Maztek had that wasteman Clive Evolution, his so-called agent, in his ear as well.

When I confronted Maztek, the fasshole lied and denied he said that, but I know the promoter and there’s no way would he lie. Loxy confronted him as well and all of a sudden, his English was limited.

Dude tried to go on social media with his fanboys in tow talking shit. He has a Renegade Hardware tattoo on his body, but in the next breath he is cussing the brand. No one knew him before the Hardware association and since he left the camp who has seen him? Just another deluded fool who thought he was bigger than he was.⁷

⁶https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1756422548012656&id=100009347821762 “I am hearing producers who make that form of dnb which is big in eastern europe are now saying the stuff is getting boring,very repetitive and all sounds the same....i could have told you that 2 years ago.....i see a shift in everyone making generic boring neuro you notice i did not put funk next to it as that music has got no funk what so ever...and please bring back the sub bass into dnb”

⁷Maztek’s reaction to this chapter. <https://www.facebook.com/maztek1/posts/10156011195123457>, “So i had a chance to read the ‘Maztek’ chapter in the Clayton

D&B Arena

Pages 162–163

Since [Drum & Bass Arena](#) started, the person who I got on the best with there was Del⁸. Rumours were rife, when they were doing ringtones for labels in the late nineties and early two-thousands, that money was being held back and artists were not being accounted to properly. I definitely think they favored the so-called big labels in most everything they did. I was always chasing them to get interviews and features on the website. After a while, it became normal.

One incident when they pushed my buttons and really made me out to be the bad guy again, was when they owed me money for some tunes they licensed for a compilation.⁹ I sent them an invoice shortly after and got told I missed the accounting period.

I know the tricks of the trade and, obviously, keeping my money

Hines book. I'm glad you mentioned me in your 'memory' but the only thing which is true is that i was dealing with Scott. And no man i am not rude people who know me would say the opposite. The reason i was not speaking to much to you is because you were always busy counting money and i did not want to disturb you. Now i know makes you feel strong my english is not the best but i am really wondering how good you are with the italian for example. You said you do not remember one of my tune but after you shut down the label you put the Audio remix of my tune in your final chapter LP. You said i was talking shit on the socials? Man you posted offences on this social without even calling me (and you said you did but you lied... bullshit you never did), my post on facebook was just an answer, i was shocked of how crazy you could be. Speak the true man it would make you happier and less depressed. And please pay me all the royalties you never paid... your distributor is still collecting money for you. So instead of spending money writing bullshit... pay what you own and i guess we are many. With Love Matt Ps: stop stalking me on instagram"

⁸Diluk Dias, owner of [AEI Media LTD](#), along with James Cotterill ([Risky](#))

⁹It could be either Drum & Bass Arena: Anthology, Andy C / Grooverider – Drum&BassArena or DJ Randall* – Drum&BassArena.

in their account as long as possible means, they gain interest. I was not happy, but I thought, “it is what it is.”

A few months later I then hit them up again asking for payment and got told some cock and bull story. I think it was something about the accountant not being around. I thought to myself, “I am only going to ask them one more time then I will resort to the old Clayton, the one before I got into dnb, maybe they might understand him a bit better.”

So, I call up one more time and dude on the phone is fobbing me off saying no one is about to pay me. But I definitely heard Risky’s voice in the background. Risky was the manager of D&B Arena at the time. I told dude that if my money was not in my account by 4 p.m., I would go down the office with a hammer to smash up the place.

I was livid. I had heard through the grapevine that other labels on the same compilation had gotten paid already. So why were they fucking about with my payment? Lo and behold, an hour later the funds were in my account.

Why do I have to act thuggish and threaten them with violence just to get my money? Then the rumours start swirling that I was being untoward. Look, I do not want special treatment. Treat me like everyone else. But I’m not going to let anyone take me for a mug. Why did they break their back to pay the other so-called big labels but then fuck about with me?

When you are parading around as a business, you should at least have basic professionalism and standard procedures to go by. Playing

favourites breeds bad blood. I expect to be treated the same as anyone else.

Brockie

Pages 164–166

Before I tell you this story, I want to let you know that Brockie's been one of my top five jungle deejays since the days of [Weekend Rush](#). When he and Redant were on air on a Sunday afternoon. It was a "Battle Royale"! If Brockie's name was on a flyer, I would always be in attendance and I locked into his Kool FM show religiously. I was a fan, so naturally when I started my Trouble on Vinyl and Big Rewind events, he was always on the bill.

It was the same when I purchased Breakin Science, Brockie was first on the lineup. I even took him out to Canada when I teamed up with Ryan Ruckus to do a few events in T-Dot (Toronto). Basically, what I want to make clear is, that I always respected him as a deejay and in hindsight I can see why he took things the way he did, when we had our war of words.

It all started with a Facebook post.¹⁰ I was coming back from celebrating my mate Jade's fortieth birthday in Portugal (I say "celebrating", but that's a pretty mild term for how much we'd been

¹⁰https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1778942469093997&id=100009347821762, "Someone post up winners from last night's jungle awards. ..Need a list of artists not to book as no doubt man will be feeling themselves for next few months and fees will go up. ..." 5.2.2017

getting on it). To be honest: I was smashed and thinking back, that probably meant I didn't quite express myself how I wanted to.

I was on the train back from the airport and catching up on the news from [the jungle awards](#). Brockie had won "Best Jungle Show" and my view was that it was not really a jungle show, and that Uncle Dugs should have taken the title. From my point of view there was no malice, but I posted my thoughts on the subject as best I could (given the state I was in).

By the time I had arrived back in my yard, it had all kicked off. At this time Brockie had "The Group" on Facebook for his fanboys and girls. I had suspected most of them were Jeremy Kyle rejects with the combined IQ of an average cockroach and now they were in my DMs proving my point. They were trying to attack me and assassinate my character, presumably hoping to impress their hero Brockie.¹¹

The whole thing was playing out on social media and it was not a good look for anyone. Brockie was sending shots on Facebook. Indirect shit. You know like Jay-Z, where it's subliminal, but you'd have to be stupid not to know what he was talking about? When I saw that, I did not need a second invitation and I dropped a few subs myself. I'd tried calling him to explain my position, but when I'd finally been able to get ahold of him, I was given a frosty reception.

Fortunately, we had a mutual friend who played mediator be-

¹¹https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1780149905639920&id=100009347821762 "Way to many sheep on fb who want to lick a man's batty crease just cause he is popular ...grow a backbone and have your own thoughts and opinions even if it goes against the majority. .I am always going to speak my mind that will never change who don't like it #suckyourmumsunderneath" 07.02.2017

tween us. She pleaded with us and eventually persuaded us to come to our senses. We eventually spoke on the phone and we managed to squash it.

Looking back, if I were Brockie, I would have been pissed off too. I didn't express myself properly and I take full responsibility for causing the problem. I did not intend any disrespect, but unfortunately it came across that way. I do not think I'll be going round Brockie's yard for Christmas dinner any time soon, but at least we can exchange pleasantries when we see each other on road.

One positive thing about these online beefs is that they expose wastemen who catch jokes when they should be stepping in to discourage the thing. One deejay in particular, who knew both of us, made some comment about popcorn.¹² I was not happy about him taking pleasure in watching Brockie and me go at it and I have not spoken to him since. I do not need people who try and instigate beef like that in my life. I have had to deal with enough of it as it is.

Tony Colman

Pages 166–169

Tony Colman (the CEO of [Hospital Records](#)), and I had a war of words many years ago. It all started one night at Swerve, the liquid

¹²https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1782494785405432&id=100009347821762 "All you fassyholes who are getting the popcorn out hoping to see drama with me and Steven Dunkno sorry to disappoint you...we spoke and addressed the post i made a few days ago and every thing is copacetic now,cooler heads have prevailed", 11.02.2017

event that Fabio used to have on a Wednesday in the lounge at The End club. I got into it with SP MC, although it was through no fault of his own. I still wanted blood from the Bailey incident and anyone who used to move with him instantly became an enemy of mine.

Stu, that's SP's real name, had a girlfriend at the time called Rebecca who used to work for the BBC. I entered the club and saw a girl who, I later would be told, was Bailey's girlfriend, although I did not know it at the time. I went up to Loxy and casually remarked that she had nice lips. It was just an innocent comment, but when Loxy said I was talking about Bailey's girl, I instantly regretted saying it.

I think that night I was itching for trouble. When I saw Stu's girl talking to Bailey's missus, something triggered me off and I started cussing both, Stu's girl and him. SP got the brunt of it though and he was only doing what any man would do: sticking up for his girl. I think he said something along the lines of, "You can't talk to her like that." By then things had gotten peak and I told him, "Let's go round the corner."

On reflection my problem was not with SP at all. I was trying to goad Bailey to stand up for his missus, so we could get into fisticuffs. It was a few years after the incident where he snitched to my girlfriend about me cheating on her and I still wanted blood. No surprise, the snake had no backbone and he kept quiet.

My thing was: I needed a reason to take his head off his shoulders or I would look like a bully. The incident ended with me saying sorry to SP. I definitely remember that drink played a part in my behaviour

that night. My actual problem was with Bailey the snitch. Rather than with SP or anyone else, so I regret how I behaved.

The next day I get a phone call from Tony Colman saying something to the effect of, “Why are you bullying Stuart?” He threatened to stop one of the Hospital artists, Logistics, from finishing a remix I’d commissioned. I had asked [Logistics](#)¹³ a few months before for a remix for Renegade Recordings and apparently he was close to finishing it at this point. My reply to Tony was brief: “Who the fuck are you, and why are you sticking your beak into something which has got nothing to do with you or Logistics? A remix is a remix, and my problem with Stu is none of your concern!” I do not think I used those exact words. Probably a few more expletives were hurled, but he got the drift and I asked him if he preferred me coming to his office and sorting it that way.

At the time I was livid as I did not appreciate him involving himself in the situation, especially as the previous night I had already apologized to SP. In my head everything was cooked and curried. I did get the remix¹⁴ eventually and so I should have, as the two things had nothing to do with each other.

Since that incident though, I’ve got loads of admiration for the Hospital gang and I always cite them as a benchmark for how you put an event on or put music out.

I remember them starting their nights in Herbal which held

¹³I’m pretty sure it was not Logistics but Nu:Tone. He is the only one from Hospital who did a remix on Renegade.

¹⁴[This?](#)

around 300 people... if that even. From there, to see them go to Heavens, then Brixton Academy, then Finsbury Park with 12.000 people gathered, is remarkable. It shows how far you can go with hard graft and a good marketing strategy.

I would hate to be still doing events and having to compete with them. In my mind there is no better label when it comes to branding themselves and I think that they have definitely set the bar for everybody else over the last few years.

I look at Hospital as a major label parading as an independent and their infrastructure amazes me. In our heyday we had eight staff. These lot have double that, if not more. I envy them from afar and if we were still putting out music it would be approached in the same way that they do things.

I remember going to the first *Hospitality In The Park* a few years ago. As a fellow promoter you go to the event with the mindset of looking at what is good and what could be better. I walked around for two hours and could not find a single thing wrong with the event... and I am a fussy so-and-so. The merchandise stall was jammed to fuck, the beer tent was heaving, and all the tents were rocking. I actually saw both [Chris](#) and Tony and commented on what an excellent job they had done on the event.

Fierce

Pages 169–175

Where do I start, about this drunken wasteman? I met Fierce through Nico of No U Turn years ago, when he was a fresh-faced sixteen-year-old teenager. He lived in the manor and somehow hooked up with the Barnes crew. He got taken under Nico's wing after doing quite a few tunes with No U Turn. So he eventually came down to our studio and ended up making some collabs. Together with Darren D Bridge and Maldini, a.k.a. [Future Forces](#) first tune I got from him (I think) was a tune he did with [Optical](#) for the [3 the Hardway EP](#). In those early days, I never realized he was the drunk, that I get the impression he is now.

The dude and I were cordial back then, as I knew he was Nico's boy. I booked him for a few of my events, as back then he was an excellent deejay and knew how to roll out a set. I think after a bit of success in the scene, he got addicted to the party life, as I started to hear stories about excessive drinking and sniffing.

I think he pissed off quite a few people in the scene by going to [Break's](#) yard (the DnB producer from Bristol) and busting dude's nose as soon as he opened the door. Then I heard, he went to one of the Vicious Circle boy's yard and threw petrol through the letterbox! When people told me, I was shocked but I thought, "Duppy knows who to frighten." It's an old Jamaican saying and translates to, "The ghost knows who to fuck with." Even then, allegedly, man was ready to roll on him, but at the last minute he got spared.

I think when Fierce gets really drunk, which seems to be quite often, he goes on social media and starts attacking people for no

reason. My turn for some reason came up and he started spouting I'm a fat cunt, etc. Not sure what triggered the fool, but obviously when word got back to me, I was like, "My name ain't Break or the dude whose yard you firebombed. I will put hands on you and show you I am not the dude to fuck with when you're drunk."

A few months after the first incident, dude was on his fuckeries again. He went on social media unprovoked and started the insults and the name calling. Anyone who knows the drunk, saw the pattern occurring.

That incident triggered me to find out his address. I sat in my yard and pondered what I should do? Do I ignore the fool or do I put a stop to his foolishness? I packed a hammer and a knife in my rucksack and was going to go round his house in Brixton to confront him.

Not many people get me to tears of rage and if it was not for Yoko and Laura, two of my mates, who begged me not to leave my yard that day, I don't know what I'd have done. They knew what mindset I was in. All I wanted was blood.

After Yoko talked me down, I was still pissed that I did not put hands on him. Then I realized, I would be seeing him in a few months at Sun n Bass. Hardware got booked to do a night and I heard through the grapevine he was playing. [September 2009]

Fast forward to the first day of [Sun n Bass](#), which is an annual week-long music festival in Sardinia, San Teodoro, Italy. I am walking with Loxy and Ink and who do I see in the distance walking towards

me? The pussyhole Fierce. He comes up to me, hugs me and says, "Please don't do anything to me, I have a drinking problem and a big mouth." By this time, everyone was looking at the situation and I did not want to be the big black guy who came to Sardinia and started trouble. I took him to the side and explained, it is not a joke going on social media and insulting me.

I felt frustrated as I wanted to give him a few slaps, but, like I said, can you imagine the rhetoric? "You hear about Clayton? He went to Sardinia and beat up little Fierce, what a monster! He should be banned from ever coming here again..."

Later that week, after I had confronted Fierce, he got banned from ever going back to the island. As per usual, he had too much drink and started abusing the promoter's mate. Typical Fierce wasteman behaviour. I actually thought I got through to him in Sardinia, but a few months later he was back on his bullshit.

Out of nowhere he started dissing me on social media again. It frustrated me, as I thought obviously dude thinks I'm a dickhead. Every time he has a drink, he mentions me. What I think made him even madder and perhaps fuelled some of this was, I slept with his missus just before they got together.

Not even going to mention this girl by name, but we were friends through mutual acquaintances and I never found her attractive. The sexual tension you get between friends of the opposite sex just was not there, but we got to be good friends though.

We had an event in Manchester and the next day I was going to

Old Trafford to watch United play. She said she wanted to come so I was like, “No problem.” After the club we went back to the hotel, both a bit tipsy.

As I said, I wasn’t attracted to her, but I told myself if she comes out the shower naked then it’s on like *Donkey Kong*. When you’re tipsy, you could drop your standards a bit. If she wanted it, I figured, I’d fling a pillow over her boat race and nut. The sex was shit. You know it’s bad, when in the morning you don’t even want round two.

One day she mentioned her and Fierce were hooking up. I said I personally do not fuck with dude, but if that makes her happy go for it. Not sure why, but she went back to him, said whatever she said and yet again dude attacks me on social media. He was asking people if they knew my address, which was all an act, as his girl knew where my yard was. Not sure why he was getting up in arms over something she did before they were together anyway.

What agitated me even more, is he then brought my son into the beef. I cannot exactly remember what he said, but it was disparaging. You venture into very dangerous territory when you start to speak about someone’s kid. The restraint I showed by not rolling up to an event he was playing at amazed me, but his karma was soon to come.

Oscar, who used to run the underground DnB night [Technology](#), booked him for a set. He was booked to play a vinyl classics set. On the night, Fierce had a temper tantrum and refused to play. Apparently, the decks weren’t set up properly, so he kicked off with the sound engineers. Instead of trying to be amicable and talk to both promoter

and sound engineer to try to sort the problem like a professional deejay would, he threw a hissy fit. He and Oscar exchanged a war of words and before you could say “Bloodclart”, Oscar thumped him in his nose.

I’ve got to rate Oscar. I think he did all of the promoters up and down the country a favour. How can you pocket your wages and think you can walk out of a promoter’s dance without playing?

When I heard the news the next day, I wanted to send Oscar a congratulatory text. Fierce is his own worst problem and over the years even his so-called closed mates have distanced themselves from him.

A few years ago, I was going to [Rupture](#), which is an underground DnB event held at Corsica Studios a few times a year. I just happened to call [Dave](#), who was the promoter, and said put my name down on the guest list. He was like, “Oh, Fierce wanted to come down but was asking if you were coming.” That proves the dude is a pussy. He does not want to see me out on road, as one of us will be carried by six and the other will be tried by twelve.

Dude is an ultimate champion wasteman. I used to feel sorry for him and concerned about his alcohol problems. Now I couldn’t give two fucks. I would not be surprised at all if one day I heard he was found dead somewhere from some type of overdose. Sadly, he has shown he cannot be helped.

Script

Pages 175–178

I got introduced to [Script](#), played first under this name in 2010.¹⁵ by [Laura Tan](#), who was a mutual friend of both of ours.¹⁶ It was around the time Hardware had a residency at Area in Vauxhall.[From 2008–2012] It was the club we moved to after the legendary End closed its doors. I remember her coming up to me and saying he deejays and makes music. I meet so many people, when I am out and the fact that I was working running an event, I barely acknowledged him. Soon, he would come to Hardware nights on a regular basis and eventually I thought I would give him a chance, as it's Laura's mate.

I began to engage in small chit-chat with him. I am an expert in spotting dudes who are begs (i.e. ass-lickers) and soon after I began to see his weaselling ways. One particular event he came up to me and started name dropping (which I hate). He was like, “Can I get a wristband to go in the booth to see [Tom](#),” and [Alix](#), (meaning [Rockwell](#) and [Alix Perez](#)) Straight away he got my back up as I was thinking “Why can't you just use their deejay name?” I said to him sarcastically, “You can see how small the deejay booth is and what

¹⁵<https://www.facebook.com/scriptdj/posts/325956042062> (24.02.2010)

¹⁶Claytons thread on this chapter: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2230023847319188&id=100009347821762, “Tara....you must be the only PR girl who allegedly offers sexual favours in exchange for work and your diary is still empty and Mike you are the ultimate champion wasteman/leech always said you were a talentless fuck,i gave you your own section in the beef section in book □”, 29.01.2019

is it you want to do in the booth? The deejays are working. What are you going to do in there? Stand up and pose next to them, so people think you are important?” I shut him down and walked away thinking this guy is a dick. Eventually he wormed his way into that clique of Rockwell, Alix Perez and Khanage, who had a house share in Hornsey, where all of them lived. He would announce of Twitter, like a true fanboy, that he was going around there to make some beats with them. Mind you, dude didn’t know anything about production and would turn up with some dusty weed and a few samples.

Pretty soon it was a running joke between [Khanage](#) and me what a beg Script was. Dude was trying too hard to blag his way in the scene. Apparently, his method of operation for years was going round begging it with different cliques. I booked him a few times in the early days of knowing him, due to Laura asking me to do her a favour. After seeing his true colours, I quickly distanced myself from him, knowing he was truly a beg friend.

A few years later I see dude made a bit of progression. Then again, if I had my tongue firmly lodged in everyone’s anal passage I would progress as well. It was a post he put up on social media that really got my back up. It was something to the effect of he hates when fans of deejays call them by their first name.¹⁷ I was baffled as this was the same dude who used to do that all the time. I fired back to him on Facebook and got DMs from various people in the scene as to why am I going at dude.

¹⁷I can’t find the post on [Facebook](#), but I guess this happened in 2018.

I simply didn't like him and could see through his façade. His social media posts also gave the impression he was DnB royalty and had made it. Got to say, he was a champion beg and everyone was fooled by him. We have exchanged a few heated words on Facebook over the years as I cannot stand the dude and I make no bones about it.

Another incident that verified he is a champion wasteman was, when [Chris Inperspective](#) put up a drunken post on Facebook about racism in the scene and dude piped up. He was giving it on the thread like he was gangster, so I was like, "Fuck the long talk," and back and forth.

I found out he was playing at a gig in Essex that weekend, so I called up the promoter to get on the guest list. I really wanted to go to the dance, walk up to him, punch him up and walk straight out. Somehow the promoter found out why I hit him up for list and asked me not to come to his dance and cause any trouble. I respected that. As a fellow promoter the most disrespectful thing you can do, is come to my dance and cause trouble. That's rule 101 in the promoter handbook.

I have known [Steve Survival](#), his partner in [SCAR](#) for ages. [Steve](#) used to engineer hip-hop and reggae way back in the early days at my studio. He grew up in the manor and knew most of the hoodrats who used to hire the studio. This was back in the mid-nineties and I always thought he was cool and talented. Steve is the driving force behind the duo. Script is just the mouthpiece who likes to act like

Charlie big bollocks.

Best way to describe Script, in my opinion, is a glorified mascot and a massive bellend. I always wondered if Survival got big in the food industry, as he came second on [Masterchef](#) a few years ago. Script would be fucked but would probably turn into a chef overnight just to keep on man's coattails.

Dillinja

Pages 178–182

Let me start off by saying [Dillinja](#) is — in my opinion — one of the greatest producers DnB has ever seen. At his peak, he was no doubt the king of the dance floor, and I can name countless anthems he has produced. Back in the day, no dance was complete until a deejay played a monstrous anthem by him.

I met [Karl](#) in the late nineties. And when Hardware was doing its first album, I had to get dude on board. I paid over the odds to get him to do a remix, but figured it was good promo for the label. We got him to do a remix of a Future Forces tune called [Strontium Jazz](#) which — to this day — I still don't know where the original is or if it came out.

Karl did the remix justice, as it was one of the biggest tunes from the album and still gets played to this day. A few years later we built up a relationship. He would pass the office from time to time and give me some music to put out. It was always a cash-in-hand job and

I used to line him up with a brown envelope stuffed with fifties. He did so many tunes, some didn't fit his label and for quick cash either [Bryan Gee](#) over at [V](#) and [Philly Blunt](#), [Carl Collins](#), who ran [Hard Leaders](#), or I would take a few bits from him.

One day he came to the studio and threw a DAT tape at me and said very nonchalantly, "This is something I did last night." I listened to it and didn't really think that much of it at the time, but took it from him straight away as it was a tune by Dillinja. Very rarely did you hear anything from him, which wasn't a dance floor smasher. The actual tune he gave me was [Twist Em Out](#).

After circulating the tune to a few deejays, I realized we had a monster smash on our hands. Pretty soon everyone and their dog was playing the tune and as per usual, the haters came out the woodwork. In conversation Karl mentioned Hype asking, why he gave me the tune and not give him the tune. Why was dude so concerned about who was giving me tunes and who was not?

During that time, [MC Skibadee](#) used to do a freestyle over it and it got to mad love. I called Skibadee and he went on to record a version we released on Trouble on Vinyl. Next thing I know, [HBO](#), the big cable network, called and wanted to license the tune for the "Ali G Show"¹⁸ series in the states. That was a good look and made the tune even bigger. We then thought, it would be a good idea to [re-release](#) it on Hardware. Loads of people still ask to this day, why we re-released it. I think it was because we wanted Hardware to get

¹⁸[The HBO version](#) ran from 2003 – 2004.

a bigger commercial profile.

At those times things were cool between Karl and me. The tunes were selling and every six months we would account to him. Eventually, the label got into financial trouble. The creditors finally came with the bailiffs and we were placed under liquidation. In layman's terms, we were defunct as a company.¹⁹

I blamed [MCPS \(Mechanical Copyright Performance Society\)](#) when we closed down. We owed them quite a bit of money. MCPS, simply put, is a collection society. When a label presses a vinyl record or a cd, some money from the revenue gets set aside to pay the artists. MCPS was set up to pay members (the musicians) a percentage of the profits the label made. We owed them money and fell behind on payments from vinyl we pressed. We wanted to sort out a payment plan, but dude in the office was a jobsworth and wasn't having a bar of it. I even went to the head office in Streatham a few times to try and iron out a deal, with no luck.

After we were forced to close down our office and studio, I spoke to Karl and tried to explain to him that TOV Music Group was forced to go into liquidation. Of course I felt bad not being able to pay him, but my company had just folded and I was in no position personally to take on company debts, nor was I legally required to do so as we were registered as a Limited Company.

I must explain why we set our company up as limited, instead of

¹⁹Not Renegade Hardware got into trouble but the TOV Music Group Ltd. Was liquidated in 2007.

a partnership and how it helped me in this situation. Setting up as a Limited Company means limited liability to you and your personal assets. If the unfortunate day did come where the company folded, even though you were down as a director, no creditors could go to you personally for any money.

Despite this, Karl came with some road talk about how he does not care and wants to get paid the outstanding royalties owed to him. That type of talk does not work with me and I said I am not paying him anything as, again, the company debts are the company debts.

I didn't see him for a while, but we had a few phone calls with him threatening me and me saying, "Do whatever you are going to do but just know it will be a madness." When man talks about putting hands on me, I turn ignorant and I stop talking. Talk is cheap in my opinion. Do what you are doing. Less of the discussion.

Fast forward to Moondance a few years ago. The mad thing is, I saw his name on the lineup and thought, "Let me pass through and talk to him and explain again, he ain't getting no money from me." I arrive at Moondance and as I am going to the VIP bit, I feel someone come up and grab me from behind. At first, I thought it was someone joking, but the grip was for too long. I turn around and it's Dillinja. I spin around and grab him by his neck as well. It was handbags. JJ Frost, GQ and a few other peeps broke it up.

Next day peeps are blowing up my phone saying I instigated it. Instigated what? I told dude numerous times the state of play, coming to me with the badman talk about, "When he sees me it's going to be

on.” Dude needs to do what he is going to do. Like I stated before: I am not a badman or gangster. But no one is going to put hands on me and get away with it.

Ain’t seen dude since the Moondance incident, but I do not think this drama has ended.²⁰

Micky Finn

Pages 182–185

My beef with Micky Finn goes back to twenty years ago. He originally put a record out called [She’s Breakin Up](#), by [Bitin’ Back](#) on [Fokus Records](#). I am pretty certain it came out in 1991 and was somewhat of an underground anthem.

Fast forward to a few years later and I was going into the studio to make a tune. [1997] That was a very rare occurrence, as I do not have the patience normally to sit in the studio for hours and hours perfecting a mixdown or a break.

I managed to find time to record a tune under my alias at the time, [IQ Collective](#), and I made a tune called [Mode One](#), where I sampled the popular TV series [Six Million Dollar Man](#). As a kid I watched it

²⁰The story is a straight up lie! I don’t know what happened exactly, but I guess Dillinja asked Clayton for money again, or threatened not to play, in April 2007. This lead to a tweet on April 25, 2017. https://twitter.com/dillinja_valve/status/856834725167718400 (or with a few screenshots <https://www.dogsonacid.com/threads/786909/>). Moondance 2017 happened on 06.08.2017. <https://www.residentadvisor.net/events/958174> So Clayton brooded over that discussion and planned to cause a scene by going there. Dillinja never played any Hardware Event from then on. He did play Breakin Science in November 2017 though.

religiously. It starred [Lee Majors](#) who played the character [Steve Austin](#). What I did not realize was, Micky had used the same sample in his tune.

My tune was gaining momentum on dubplate. Then one day out the blue, [Phil Wells](#) (who was one of the partners in [Vinyl Distribution](#)) called me and said, if I actually put my tune out he would not distribute it. I was surprised and said, “Why are you getting involved in tune politics, you’re a distro.” Then I found out Micky Finn had some type of interest in Vinyl Distribution. I think he was a silent partner, so Phil tried to force my hand which is the worst thing someone can do. I said to him, “It’s cool, that tune is coming out, even if I have to move to another company.” Shortly after that we moved to [SRD](#) which, in hindsight, was the best thing we did. Vinyl Distribution was run by some dodgy guys and it kept closing and opening up under different names.

Getting back to Micky: he calls me up one day shouting down the phone that the sample is his and he paid to license it from the American network, [ABC](#). We all know nothing goes like that. I think he was just playing on my naivety at the time.

I was fairly new to the scene and I didn’t want to ruffle any feathers. But I also wasn’t going to let anyone take me for a prick. We were arguing on the phone and he gave it all the gangster talk. He implied he was going to come down to my office. I replied, “This is my address, come down and see what happens when you turn up at my doorstep.”

By this time, I was determined the tune was going to come out as it was now more about principle. I was not having anyone tell me what music I could and couldn't release, as everyone knows a sample is a sample. How can someone complain about something they took without permission when someone else did the same thing?

Fast forward a few years later, Micky and I bump heads again. This time because I was going to do an event²¹ at Sanctuary in Milton Keynes with Leroy (aka DJ SS) and had the idea of a North vs South clash type of event. Yet again, Micky calls my phone spouting profanity, saying he had the idea first and more threats of what he is going to do to me. I have learnt real gangsters just do what they do without shouting to the world and the ones who constantly bark are usually empty vessels.

Fabric

Pages 185–191

I have always had drama at Fabric. I went to the opening night in 1999 and wasn't in the venue for more than fifteen minutes, when the bouncers came up to me thinking I was shotting. It really pissed me off as I was with my girlfriend and it was an embarrassing situation, to say the least. Because I was dressed in a basketball jersey and had my diamond chain and watch, they figured I was a wrong 'un. The

²¹Not sure, but it could've been [this event](#)

South African security dude was cool once they searched me and found out I was a promoter. Not that it mattered who I was.

The way they manhandled me pissed me off. By then I had stopped shotting many, many years before, but the stigma of being a dealer never left me. I would see boys who, back in the day, would go to festivals with me and make dough, come up to me in clubs and ask if I had gear. I told them I stopped, was trying to be legit and that they should do the same.

A few years ago, I went to Fabric on a regular basis. Most of my industry mates would play and invite me to come down. I hate the venue, as I find it soulless. But I used to go and sit in the green room most of the night, smoking weed or chatting to mates (I use that word loosely).

One night I went there, the ignorant Eastern European meathead dude searched me. It was a very intrusive search to the point dude was feeling up my genitals. Straight away I stood back and asked, "What the fuck are you doing?" He said if I was not happy with the search to go to his colleague. I went to his mate who searched me even more intrusive. I was pissed. Not even the police search you like that and it really fucked up my night.

When you go to a club, the first people you see, and interact with, are the security. If greeted nicely, you are in the right frame to party. Get talked to like a cunt, you are properly not going to have a good night.

As I was leaving Fabric that night, I went up to one of the securities

and complained about the dude who searched me. I was told, if I did not like it, do not come back. That's when I decided the pen is mightier than the sword.²²

I put up a post a day later on Facebook (or as I call it, Wastebook) stating how the pussyhole bouncers searched me. Quite a few people came forward sharing their own experiences. I put up another post as well saying I was going to go to the press and someone from Fabric called me and asked me to come in for a meeting.

That Friday²³ I went in before the club opened and sat with Head of Operations, General Manager and Head of Security (who happened to be the same South African dude who in 1999 took me in the back room and thought I was shotting in the club. I remembered his boat race and accent). I explained the grabbing and feeling of my genitals

²²https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1593362694318643&id=100009347821762, "went fabric last night and the security search was way over the top, spoke to a few people who said the same thing,when another man is grabbing and squeezing your genitals and you ask him wtf are you doing and he does it again i have a problem with that so after being in there for a few hours i had to speak to the head doorman and he said..if you dont like it dont come back,my mates got told to take off shoes and socks,not even airports or police can search you the way the pussyhole eastern european pricks tried to come at me...if anyone ever sees me in fabric again you have license to cuss me.....not going back to that place again ..it takes a special fucked up man, even if the club gave you instructions for you to want to feel up a mans genitals" 26.03.2016

²³https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1597827573872155&id=100009347821762, "I am going to fabric tonight to speak to the manager and get the badge numbers of the 2 guys who for a better word.....molested me A mate who was with me is writing a email as the same thing happen to her,if anyone else has had the same problem if you could drop me a email stating what happened as i am compiling a case against them,a week on and i am still livid at what happened,my point is if security are going to search you like that,why not say just before..we are going to do a rigid search do you mind and have you any objections,then you can make a choice to stay and consent or leave,but to just grab my genitals and then grope me then say if you dont like it dont come back,i find that hard to stomach so in this instance the PEN is mightier than the SWORD....." 01.04.2016

was not on and that the bouncers took liberties. If that night would have been a so-called urban night (that means reggae, funky house or something like that) there's no way they would have searched people like that, as a riot would have ensued. Because ninety-nine percent of the crowd were middle-class white kids, they think they can take the piss. I also said, "If you're going to do a thorough search like that, put up a sign asking do you consent to a search where your genitals are grabbed and squeezed."

After thirty minutes of me stating my case, I was told they would look into the situation. As I was leaving, I saw the meathead, steroid-induced wasteman who accosted me. I wanted to go up to him and punch him in his face. Trust me, I was steaming with rage at the thought of dude thinking it was cool to violate me.²⁴

I swore I would not go back to Fabric... I have not been back to Fabric since that incident, if it happened again there'd be no talking to club managers, I would take it as a straight violation.

Right before I wrote this piece, this book was supposed to be out already. Due to an unexpected problem with our printer, I had the opportunity to experience and write about another incident at Fabric.

I never thought I would go to Fabric again, but my friend Ramaaz asked me to go with him. I agreed, but more apprehensively. [Rupture](#)

²⁴https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1959047084416867&id=100009347821762, "I went fabric last night and managed not to get sexually violated by the steroid induced meat head bouncers on the way in, the airport style search is long but going last night changed my perception a bit about that place....", 31.12.2017

had a room there and as I was curious, what it was like at the venue, I went to show my support.

I do not know why I agreed to go. The day had been fine up until that point. [25.01.2019] I had [an interview](#) with Dugs on [Rinse FM](#) and went to see Yoko for a bit afterwards. I should have known the entire night was going downhill when we were stopped by the police as we were driving to the club. A case of racial profiling, as we were doing nothing wrong.

After the headache with the police on the drive in, we were met with the new, airport-style, security checks to get into the club. First, they make you take off your shoes and they bang them on the table to see, if anything will fall out. Then, they take your ID and run it through a machine, before using a metal detector wand on you. This entire process seemed so over-the-top and such a waste of time. If someone wants to get drugs in that club, they will find a way.

Once inside, I was instantly reminded of why I hate the place. There were absolutely no vibes. The dance was soulless. I knew it wouldn't be a late on there, but I decided to make my rounds and check things out.

I was in the dance no more than forty-five minutes when we were already preparing to leave. I was standing talking to my friend Rochelle, when six security guards appeared and surrounded me, asking me, to go with them and have a word outside. I was gob smacked. I stood my ground and refused to go with them. I hadn't done anything wrong. After a few minutes of our stand-off, one of

them said they could not hear over the music and asked again, if I would accompany them outside.

By this time a lot of people were taking notice of the commotion. So I agreed to follow them outside. We went outside behind the main dancefloor. My mind kept having flashbacks to my previous violations with the security at the club and I was feeling irate. The first thing I said to them, when we got outside, was, "Do you think I was shotting in there?" One of the security guards thought he was clever and said, "Why would you say that?" I replied, "Why else would six security guards surround me like that?" I told them, that before we went any further, that they needed to get one of the managers of the club, as I knew the manager there that night was someone I new well.

They went and got the manager and he asks me, "What's wrong?" I told him, "You tell me what's wrong. These guys want to search me," to which he replied, "If you have got nothing on you, let them search you." My anger was rising inside me, but I tried to remain as calm as I could. I told him flat out, that I refuse to get searched, simply on principle. I was tired of getting profiled for my size, my clothes and my blackness. I was already in a bad mood from being stopped by the police on the way in. I was not having a rent-a-cop at the club get overzealous with me, too.

While the six security guards had me surrounded, four more arrived. The stand-off was tense, but I was prepared to fight. I was not selling drugs and had not given them a reason to think, that I

was intending to... other than being big and black. I was not going to back down. The sheer amount of security around me drew a lot of attention to us and I was getting more upset and embarrassed, as it dragged on. You could see the looks on people's faces as the walked by. Some strangers, some I knew, and all looking and wondering — assuming — what I had done to get that sort of security presence around my. Ryan from Best of British passed by and tried to tell them, they were messing with the wrong guy, but they weren't listening.

Eventually, the manager returned and told me I could go home. As I rode home, I could not help but feel it was my fault for even going there in the first place, to give them the opportunity to take liberties with me.

As I spoke to my friends following the incident, a few suggested that maybe the club hassled me on purpose, to get me in a position where I would not be coming back there again. Either by choice or by provoking a reaction to get myself banned. I have to say, I would not put it past them. The whole incident did not add up. If that was the case, they got their wish. I will never give my support at that venue again.²⁵

Cabbie

Pages 191–194

²⁵https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2228074014180838&id=100009347821762, “Last night got stopped by the feds due to driving while black, then got dash out of fabric for allegedly shotting pills will explain later in detail... ☐”, 26.01.2019

[Cabbie](#) is the stereotypical fuckboy. Dude has been in the scene for ages and has never amounted to anything. He got his name as he used to drive a few deejays around. I think he is one of those dudes who thinks because he knows a few people, his position in the scene would be concrete. Purely on the fact that he was an errand boy.

One of the most throw-away artists of his era. I think he dabbled at production a bit but failed miserably. He is the epitome of music by numbers. A pretentious twat in the studio with untold rules and regulations, riding coattails and copying other producers' presets and sounds. Dude is so salty, he wastes all his time moaning and hating rather than doing any quality studio work. Rather than push himself to learn his craft, he relies on others to hold his hand and walk him through the process. He's one of those dudes who is a complete simpleton but thinks he's really smart. I have known him for years and always thought he was weird, but last year dude took the fuckboy crown.

We have a mutual friend, Sally, who is a deejay and producer in the scene. One night, she and I went out to Fabric. I remember the exact day [25.03.2016], it was when Bad Company were making a comeback and I thought I would pass through and [have a butchers](#). Cabbie had a thing for Sally for a while, but she had no interest in dude and wanted to keep it strictly platonic. Dude was desperately on her case like a pest, despite her continually rejecting his advances.

I left Fabric early that night while Sally stayed. As soon as I leave, Cabbie goes up to her and tells her she should be careful about talking

to me as I am not popular. And if people saw her talking to me it would be frowned upon and she would be ostracized.

As anybody who knows me well, I have quite a few girls as mates. People find that odd sometimes, but what would you rather do? Walk around with a bag of man? No! I like ladies, plain and simple.

Anyway, while he was warning Sally about speaking to me, he makes a comment to the effect of, “Why are acting like a black man’s whore or a black man’s meat?” My mate did not tell me the conversation for ages, as she knew I would hit the roof.

I do not like racists, especially undercover ones. These dudes float through the scene acting like they are your mates, then, for whatever reason, decide to say racist jibes when it suits them.

A few months later she tells me about the incident but makes sure she does not tell me dude’s name, as she knew all hell would break loose. The incident always stuck in my head, as I now knew someone, I mix with made some racist remarks. Sally found it upsetting as the whole “black man’s whore” was a low blow (for several reasons).

A few months later, I brought the subject up again as I had to find out who dude was. I did not like the idea of a racist piece of shit smiling in my face and cussing me behind my back. She eventually lets the cat out the bag and I obviously hit the roof. I knew dude and thought he was cool. To then find out homeboy is a racist piece of shit, caught me by surprise.

I went on social media and put up a post repeating exactly what he said and Facebook ended up banning me for thirty days (because

I used the n-word).²⁶ What made me even more vexed, were the guys who knew both of us going on social media and defending dude. I was like, “You don’t know dude like you thought you did. I know one hundred and one percent dude was spitting racist shit to our mutual mate.”

I called and confronted him and the dude lied through his teeth in typical fuckboy fashion. There is a saying that goes, “Give him enough rope and he’ll hang himself”. In my eyes he had already fitted the noose. I just wanted to make sure he followed through. I made sure everyone I knew who knew him was told he was a racist piece of shit.

Allegedly he was getting phone calls after that and a few dudes went to his yard. That put a huge smile on my face when word got back to me. There is no place for racists in this scene and I loved the thought of how much stress that must have caused him.

I wanted to go to an event he was playing at a few weeks after to settle things, but it was a Jungle Splash event. Paul is a good mate of mine and I did not want to disrespect his dance.

You would think after all, that dude would have piped down and

²⁶https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1969448570043385&id=100009347821762, “So i went to fabric a few years ago with a female friend who so happens to produce dnb as well,i never normally stay in any club longer than a few hours,anyway i went home about 3am and next day i spoke to my mate,a producer who she wont name as she knows i would put hands on him, went up to her and said why u hanging about with clayton, and in the next breathe asked if she was a ‘nigger lover’,obviously i was furious and demanded to know who dude was but she knew what would happen if she told me,so for all you people thinking mitsubishi is a one off,your mistaken plenty more racist out there amongst us”, 19.01.2018

laid low. To this day, dude still flaps his gums about me on social media. Once a fuckboy, always a fuckboy. I suppose all the years of his life devoted toward being an utterly forgettable, mediocre artist at best has made him salty. They say the mask of a racist always slips. Eventually the scene will notice what a complete shitcunt he is, if they haven't forgotten about him already.

Chapter 19

Black Thursday

Pages 195–205

Black Thursday will go down in DnB folklore. It was named Black Thursday as it was the day that all our artists left the camp. It so happened to be a Thursday that all hell broke loose, similar to the stock market crash which happened on a Friday. Hence why we named it “Black Thursday”. Let me take you back to the chain of events that led to this infamous day.¹

Months leading up to Black Thursday, things were good in the camp. We had three labels, Renegade, Trouble on Vinyl and Hardware and each was gaining notoriety in its own right. After a slow rise, our camp was getting talked about through the scene as the next label to watch out for.

I was still hungry for success and the chip on my shoulder, that

¹Winter 1998/1999. [The Nine](#) came out in December 1998. So it could've been September, October or November.

I came in the scene with, was still there for everyone to see. I saw other labels around at the time succeed, mostly without any real talent. It was mostly who they knew and getting the right deejays to play the music. We were different. No one gave us a start-up and I relished in that.

Any success comes with a price and most of the artists were getting shit talked in their ears by other label bosses and producers. You know the usual crap like, “Why not come over to our camp? Why are you giving your music away? You’re the talented one, you should set up your own label and not let other people profit off your hard work...”, etc.

It is hard for new producers who come into the scene not to have their head turned. Most of these dudes worshipped (in somewhat of an unhealthy way) the deejays who were championing their music at the time. I could see why heads were getting turned.

We were determined to set up our camp the right way. There is no point having artists put music out on your label and not think about securing their long-term future so both parties can succeed. We held talks with our lawyer and business adviser at the time and it was suggested we should offer all the artists a contract which tied them to the label on a long-term basis.

It makes me laugh when I think how far ahead our thought process was at the time. Remember this was 1997 or 1998 and already we had the whole 360 signing process in our head.

A *360 deal* is now commonplace in the music industry. It is when

you sign to a label and profits are split across everything the artist does to generate money. Whether that be merchandise, record sales or live shows. The industry was in a slump with actual physical record sales declining due to piracy and the surge of *MP3* sales. To still have a good revenue stream, the *360 deal* was born and record companies came up with the idea. Nowadays it is commonplace, but back then people thought we were crazy.

As Kane was the longest serving artist in the camp, he was the buffer between the management (which was Mark and me), and the rest of the crew (which was Justin aka Genotype, Mark O'Neil aka DJ Red, Jason Maldini aka Maldini, Darren White aka D-Bridge, and Dan Stein aka DJ Fresh).

Like I already said about heads getting turned, we kind of started Hardware as an outlet for the more deeper, darker, futuristic DnB and the success of releases by Future Forces made the duo (D-Bridge & Maldini) think they were bigger than the label. I was never about that mind process. Without the label, there is no platform for the artist to showcase their skills.

In their heads they already had an escape plan to leave the label and set up their own shit. So, when we offered them the contract on that fateful day it was music to their ears. In hindsight, I think Mark and I could have approached them differently. But we were literally the blind leading the blind and had barely any business acumen. I wish if we were savvier and more professional in our approach, maybe that would have helped the situation. Regardless of how we

approached the artists, to this day I still think the majority of them already had their heads turned.

We called an impromptu meeting in our office and we laid out the plans about signing them. Quickly it was met with resistance which led me to throw a hissy fit and I said, “It’s our way or the highway.” Within a matter of minutes, all of them left and reality hit us: we no longer had a camp of artists.

A well-known deejay, who I won’t name, allegedly went into Black Market laughing, “There’s nothing but tumbleweed over at the Trouble on Vinyl offices.” It got back to me and the barb stung. Why would someone get kicks and laughs over the demise of another label? There’s catching joke and then there’s just fuckeries and bad mind. I was hurt, but I used the barbs to fuel me to reorganize and get a new roster of artists together.

I didn’t speak to the old artists for years and soon after them leaving the camp, [Bad Company](#) was born and the rest is history. Imagine how sick to my stomach I was, when those boys took over the scene like a tsunami. I would have to go out and hear a whole night of Bad Company tunes. The little satisfaction I got at the time was, that I found them and I’ve got a talent for spotting good up and coming producers. So I could find more.

People harp on about [The Nine](#) tune being an all-time DnB classic. It was the first tune released by the ex-Hardware boys on their own imprint and it caused a riot on the dance floor. To me, I never knew what the fuss was about. It was a remix as far as I was concerned

of [The Code](#), which was a track Fresh and Jason Maldini did before leaving the camp.

For years, I squarely put the blame at the feet of Kane, as I thought he was the ringleader of the mutiny. Years after speaking to him, I realized it was just a matter of when, not if, that the boys were going to leave.

When Fresh joined Hardware, it was the perfect time as he came from money. His dad was a successful businessman, who owned a chain of restaurants and a few nightclubs.² I remember first meeting Fresh (we had a friend in common called Darren) and we used to go to his dad's restaurant in Covent Garden and take the piss. We would order food followed by a few bottles of champagne. After a while we got banned from going there and I remember going to Fresh's house for the first time after that.

That is when I realized, how rich his father was. His house was the old house of King Henry VII and it was decked out with stuffed deer and old body armor on the walls. Darren, being the hood rat that he is, allegedly took some of his dad's [Krugerrands](#), which are old gold coins. I soon found out he was not allowed to go back. The bit that stood out for me was in the morning, when we went outside to this big shed. He opened the shed, pressed a button and a helicopter came out of the ground. It was something like out a movie and then I saw the tennis courts, stables and maids. Then it hit me: I was born with a razor blade in my mouth and he was born with a silver spoon.

²Brian Stein, [The Times article](#) or [Tatler article](#)

The point I was making was, for Future Forces to set up they needed a dude with money who could finance the studio. Fresh was that dude. Soon after, Bad Company set up shop above his dad's restaurant in Hampstead.³ At first, everyone including me, thought Fresh was just the dude with the dough. He proved, a bit afterwards, that he was also the ideas guy and the majority of the Bad Co. classics. He was instrumental in the writing process.

I think for a long time, Fresh wanted to prove to his dad he was not a failure. His dad, I heard, was a bit disappointed his son did not follow him in the world of business. I suppose it could have been easy for Dan to do that, but I commend him for sticking to something which he had passion for. Ultimately, after achieving chart success and securing large amounts of money, I think, his dad is proud of his achievements now.

Dashing away a Demo

Pages 200–202

One of the funniest stories that happened during my time running the label is when a guy tried to sue me for throwing away his demo tape. If it did not happen to me, I wouldn't believe it was true.

I knew this guy, DJ Flames, just from around the scene (he used to play for [Grant](#) from Epidemik).⁴ I knew from talking to him the

³Could be the [Café des Arts](#) in Hampstead.

⁴Can't find who DJ Flames is, but he was playing a few events for Epidemik.

first time I met him, that he was a few sandwiches short of a picnic. At the time, I did not think anything of it as we all have our quirks. Something didn't sit right with me about dude. Sometimes you just get a feeling about people. Perhaps it was my drama radar telling me this dude was about to go off.

Anyway, one night I was out, and he comes up to me and says he has some music he wants me to listen to. I replied as I usually did, "No problem send me a demo." At that particular time, I was getting loads of demos every week and I always vowed I would listen to all of them, as you never know when you'll find a gem. I remember getting his demo and listening to it. If I am honest: I didn't think too much of the tunes. Me being me, I discarded the demo in the rubbish after I listened to it, as I did with all demos I was not interested in (this was common practice with other labels as well). Why would you hold onto something you were not interested in?

A few days after, the guy called and asked if I listened to the demo. I was honest and said I listened to it, but I was not interested in signing the tunes. At some point in the conversation, he asked what happened to the demo and I said that I threw it away after I listened to it. Lo and behold, a few days later I get a phone call from his so-called lawyer. Yep, you read that right: Dude had his lawyer ring me!

The lawyer says to me his client was not happy about me throwing his demo away and wanted to start legal proceedings against me. I honestly thought it was a windup, but as I spoke to the lawyer, I

realized he was actually serious.

I managed to find the guys number a few days later and I called and cussed him. I asked, why he was wasting my time with this foolish escapade. That is when I knew he wasn't right in the head. Dude kept insisting it was a liberty for me to throw his demo away. I cannot even comprehend the logic. I think his lawyer must have known he was a crackpot as well, after a few calls back and forth I did not hear any more about it.

That was the first and last time I was ever threatened with legal action over discarding an unwanted demo. I still see dude out from time to time, and he still comes up and says hello like nothing ever happened. I wonder if he even remembers. I am cordial as he clearly has some issues, but that experience is one I will never forget.

Testimonial — Dushi

Pages 202–205

Clayton has always been a good friend to [me](#). He's always been there when I have been down or when I have needed advice. I know I will always get brutal honesty and reality from him, even if it is something that I have not wanted to hear. And at times, it has annoyed me profoundly. He will always say it how it is. He genuinely cares. Nobody is perfect and sometimes he, like everyone, has gotten things wrong.

My experience from the beginning of our friendship is that he has always been there for me, has come through for me and had my back. We have had our arguments, annoyed each other, talked them through, reached an understanding that we can live with and declared a truce! That is what friends that care about each other do. Honesty and tolerance are the bedrock of friendship.

My experience of Clayton is: he is a very loyal friend who will unflinchingly support someone, but he is incredibly intuitive. He will pick up on bullshit, self-deception and fantasy as if he has a sixth sense. However, if you cross him he will come out fighting and there are some who may find his delivery slightly too brutal. This tendency could possibly be what has gotten him into trouble in the past; a too real and overly emotional delivery, born of honesty, that has caused others pain. Because I am similar, I recognized this characteristic in him early on, as I can easily relate to this sensitive side and resulting overreaction. It is in both our characters to overreact and end up looking like the bad guy.

When we were getting to know each other, many people in the music scene warned me that I should not hang out with Clayton. They said, that if I turned up anywhere with Clayton, it would make me look bad and I would be rejected from the scene. This put me in a moral dilemma, as the only experience I had of Clayton was, that he was a good friend to me. Always checking up on me to make sure I was alright. I did not think it was right to cut him off on the basis of hearsay and decided to make my own decision about him.

Because I had been warned and been told so many stories, I kept a little distance and took my time to get to know him better. As time has gone by, the guy has really come through for me many a time. Sometimes mistakes have been made both ways and each one of us, occasionally, has accidentally hurt the other. But ultimately, I feel his heart is in the right place... and so is mine. Ours has become an enduring friendship.

He is one of my closest friends now. The guy cooked me a Christmas meal this year. I know he did it because he gets me and could see I needed to be shown that love. And that I had a good friend there for me. It really meant the world to me... it really did! I know that if I go somewhere with Clayton, he will always make sure I am safe. If he thinks I have behaved badly, he will instantly pull me up and take the time to explain to me why. This is a good friend, a real friend and someone that has become like family to me.

I have argued with a few people about Clayton, as I am aware that a lot of people have judged him to be a bad person. Therefore, I thought it would help if he wrote this book. I felt it would be cathartic for him and I hoped that other people might see what I could see in Clayton. He is a good guy, his heart is in the right place and that is the most important thing.

Once Clayton's friendship is earned, he will always be there for you. If you are a friend, he will hang with you regardless of how it may affect his image. He will always say exactly what he thinks. He would never make a good politician! He is true to what he believes

and will always be real and loyal... as long as you are with him too.

Chapter 20

The Second Wave

Pages 206–223

Future Cut

Page 206

Darren Lewis and Tunde Babalolo¹ — better known to the masses as Future Cut — were a production duo from Manchester, who I met when Tunde was a promoter. We ended up doing a gig in “Gunch-ester” aka Manchester, as it was known fondly back then. We were speaking after the gig and he said he was dabbling in production and gave me a demo. My ears pricked up instantly, and soon after we signed them to the label.

They both had a vision to not just make DnB from early days and I was not surprised in the slightest when they went on to record and

¹Iyiola Babalola. He is called Tunde by everyone. Full Name Iyiola Babatunde Babalola.

produce [Lily Allen's](#) first [album](#). These boys were the catalyst for Chase & Status to get into production. They introduced me to Chase & Status, as both had studios in a unit in Manchester, and it was the remix of [20/20](#), that got Saul and Will instant recognition.

DJ Reality

Page 207

I met [Chris Segrides](#) through Mel, who used to own Scream Records in Southgate. He worked in a high street shop. When I got his demo, he was the first signing to TOV after the infamous exodus of the previous roster. Trouble on Vinyl suited his production style and he became one of the go-to guys in the camp.

Usual Suspects

Pages 207–212

The trio, made up of [Keaton](#) a.k.a. [Lawrie Hughes](#), [Chris Lavin](#) aka Chris Suspects and [Karl Hovland](#), was the first signing to Hardware after the mass exodus. Loxy brought them to my attention. I remember seeing Keaton at the Bluenote Sessions but didn't hold any conversation with him.

I have to big up both Andrew (Loxy) and Giles (Ink), both of them helped me source a new camp and that's one of the reasons they're known as the "Hardware Generals".

Keaton is one of the most talented producers I have met and he doesn't really get the props I see other producers constantly getting. He definitely influenced a generation. Originally from Southampton, he teamed up with Chris and Karl and very rarely do you see a production outfit score a big tune off the first release. Keaton and Karl did a tune together called [Advent](#). Loxy cut the tune on dubplate and somehow, I heard it. I got ahold of Keaton, came down to the studio for a meeting and played me the early version of [Killa Bees](#) and we agreed [Killa Bees](#) would be the first release under the name Usual Suspects. I loved Keaton's marketing idea for the name and, soon enough, [Killa Bees](#) started doing damage on the dance floor via the dubplates.

As a label boss, you can most of the time gauge how big a tune will be, by how it is doing on the circuit. Pretty soon everyone was calling up asking for the tune and I thought, this is a good reaction and just what the label needed. But even I was not prepared for how big this simple roller became. [Notting Hill Carnival](#) that year [1999] made me aware we had a contender for tune of the year on our hands, as every single deejay played it over the two-day event and over time it would up getting rewinds.

I think one of the reasons Usual Suspects didn't maintain the momentum from the success of [Killa Bees](#), was the fact they were young and new to the scene. Keaton had just turned eighteen and moved from Winchester to the big lights of London. Six months before he was just another normal raver going out networking. Fast forward

a year later, he's DJing around the world and rubbing shoulders with his musical heroes. When you add the constant drug taking and excess partying, it will almost always end in failure. [Killa Bees](#) went on to sell tens of thousands of records and the tune firmly put Hardware back in people minds.

Chris and Keaton had a personality clash. Sometimes you are put with someone in the studio and if you are both polar opposites, it might not work. With Chris and Keaton that soon became apparent.

Keaton was from a middle-class family from outside London and Chris came from money. His dad was a successful businessman and Chris never wanted for nothing and I think that set the fallout. Keaton was hungry for success, whereas Chris was in it just for a laugh really, as he knew he was set financially for life.

Early on in Suspects' relationship with Hardware, there was a red flag. We started our own deejay agency, which Yoko was running. Just like we started the nights, we started the agency to have more control over what our artists did.

Anyway, [Killa Bees](#) blew up and we were organising a big tour of North America and not all of Suspects could go on tour. The promoters were taking a package from Hardware and there was only space for one of the Suspects. As Keaton was the face of the group and more engaging, we decided he would go. Chris, being Chris, kicked off and started talking about getting lawyers involved. His dad was filthy rich and I guess Chris, being the spoilt brat he was, was flexing his muscles.

Then and there I should have fucked him off. When time came to sit down with the boys and talk about long-term contracts, I did not like Chris's attitude. Karl was the engineer of the group and was very chilled. He just wanted to make music. Keaton and Co. made a few more EPs for Hardware and then the cracks started to appear in the relationship. It was plain and simple: regardless of how much time they spent in the studio, they did not get on and that's a very important part of a working relationship. If you are touring with someone, eventually you must get along.

Keaton decided to go solo and soon started his own imprint [Refuge Audio](#) and got major success teaming up with [Hive](#), who was from San Francisco.

In my opinion, Hive was the best and most successful DnB producer North America has produced. I still remember hearing [Neo](#) for the first time and thinking "WTF". He and Keaton made some classic anthems and I was lucky to secure a few for Hardware.

The constant partying eventually took its toll on Keaton and the fact he has been diagnosed with bipolar didn't help his mental state when it came to writing DnB.

I can identify with Keaton more than a lot of others, as I suffer depression in the same way he does. We often call each other, talk and try to give advice to one another. Keaton is a troubled soul and an example of how the music business can swallow you up and spit you out with a quickness.

Keaton will always be remembered for being one of the scenes

original party animals. He should write a book and call it “Caning it 101”. I would put money on Keaton outlasting most of the scene’s legendary caners. His yard in Shepherds Bush, which I still remember being 10 Hopgood Street, was a party zone. We called the sessions back in the day “jump offs” as they would last for days and it was literally the last man standing. Three days later Keaton would come out the other end victorious.

The dude is so talented in the studio, not just making DnB. He would play me some raw skeletons of tunes across different genres and I would say, “Stop fucking around and get these on road.”

A few years back, Keaton was going through some problems and ended up staying at my yard for a while. That was when I really got to know him. He can be fucking annoying at times and the last time Hardware did Outlook Festival (which is held in Croatia) we almost physically came to blows.² He knows how to wind me up, I remember [Mark System](#) saw the madness unfolding and gave us a look like, “WTF are you two on.”

A few days later it was squashed. I consider Keaton almost like a little brother and families always squabble, so that episode was quickly put to one side. Keaton will always be my boy. I have seen him grow up from a fresh-faced teenager to becoming wiser and more chilled, as he is approaching mid-life. I really wish he would have fulfilled his musical promise. His sound was copied by the likes of [Vicious Circle](#), [Nocturnal](#), [Universal Project](#) and a few others. And

²Renegade Hardware Boat Party Outlook Festival 2015, 5.9.2015 19:30 – 22:20

he definitely — in my opinion — is a certified OG in this ting.

Ink

Pages 212–216

I met [Giles](#) aka [Ink](#) in [Music House](#), which is the infamous place deejays would go and cut dubplates. I randomly sat down next to him whilst waiting to get some dubs cut. We struck up a conversation and he asked me what my favourite track was at that time. [1996] I replied that it was an [Architex](#) tune called [Blueprint](#) and mispronounced the artist name. To this day, I always get ribbed about that conversation. That was crazy; to think of all the tunes I could have said, I said the one he produced.

Even to this day, he loves to tell anyone within earshot his tune was the first DnB tune to be played on the mighty BBC Radio One: [Bukem](#) opened with it when he did those two legendary mixes with [MC Conrad](#). That is a good trivia fact.³

Truth be told, we met at the right time, as Black Thursday recently happened and I was glad to link up with some new deejays and producers who were on my level. I used to see Ink play at Swerve and the early Bluenote Sessions. Not many deejays can say they played at both of those seminal DnB nights and watched the scene get shaped by talented producers.

³Radio 1 Essential Mix, LTJ Bukem & MC Conrad broadcast on Sunday 16.07.1995.

Pretty soon after, he was a regular at the studio and he and Loxy combined to make the highly regarded [Quasimodo EP](#).

Ink and Loxy both grew up as b-boys and you can tell by listening to the productions they've done together, that they were heavily influenced by hip-hop. Ink was the driving force in the early days of [The Horsemen](#) era and he was far ahead of [Labyrinth](#) and [Tinie Tempah](#). His cousin is [Sway](#), the UK rapper who was very big in the late 2008 and 2009 and they did an [EP](#) which incorporated DnB and hip-hop. This was years before Tinie came with the club smash [PassOut](#). I do not think, at the time, people were ready for the link-up.

During this time, we started hanging out more and quickly we became good mates outside the music. Soon we were travelling the world, catching jokes. I could write a book alone on the capers and the madness he and I have gotten up to around the world.

One of the funniest times was when we went to Brazil and the first port of call was São Paulo. We used to converse all the time on the phone. On what place would you like to go for the holiday of a lifetime and both of us always said Brazil. Next day, without telling me, he bought me a ticket to go.

This is what I mean about dude: he is generous to his mates and I think that is why we clicked straight away. He was just finishing a mini-tour of North America and flew in from Washington the day after.⁴

⁴It could have been [3:8 ANTICS @ CLUB DAEDALUS w/ ROHAN & DJ INK](#), 03.08.2006.

The first thing we do when he lands, is to go and try finding some food. My Portuguese was limited to one or two words, so we spent the first hour going round São Paulo asking for food and having great difficulty. Eventually, we went into one of the kitchens and had to lift the pots to show the waiter exactly what we were talking about. Chicken (frango) and rice (arroz) were the first two Portuguese words I learnt.

Another crazy story I vividly remember was when we went to Brazil another time, this time to Rio de Janeiro. We decided we wanted to go to a strip strip club and bar located downtown, we took a taxi from Copacabana Beach, where our hotel was located.

The traffic was hectic, and we were not going anywhere, after ten minutes of not moving, Giles. Being the craven and trusty dude that he is, he says, "We should get out and walk to the club." Me, being me, I nodded and soon as we got out the taxi two Brazilian cops with guns drawn appear and start asking us for identification papers. Bear in mind, I had a few ecstasy tablets on me in my little front jeans jacket and instantly thought, I need to get rid of them before the feds start searching me. All the while the conversation is not going anywhere as we did not speak Portuguese and the cops never spoke English.

What happened next surprised the shit out of me; instead of calling a patrol car the feds stopped a normal bus and took us on board with guns drawn. I started thinking madness, that they were going to take us around the corner and shoot us execution style. Just

before going to Rio, I saw a few programs about the police, and I knew they didn't ramp.

Anyway, we reach the police station and end up in the cells for five hours. Eventually, they drove us to our hotel and we showed our passports. Even the hotel staff were perplexed as to why we got stopped. Apparently, we looked and dressed like the favela youths who come down now and again and cause havoc. Their joke is, after all the drama, they gave us a lift to the club we were originally going to.

I do not know what it is with Ink and me getting caught up in drama in Brazil. Another incident which scared the shit out of me was on another trip with my non-DnB mates. I think seven of us went out to Rio for a mate's stag do. We were on our way downtown again and an undercover police car stopped us, pulled out machine guns and told us to get out the car. Whilst holding up my hands, the dude was shouting to us in Portuguese to show ID. Once they established we were tourists one of the policemen said in broken English to me, "Why are you shaking?" Giles replied, "Cause he has never had anyone point a big-ass machine gun at him." That joke broke the mood and quickly after we were on our way. I have a few more mad stories, which I cannot publish on here, as my sisters and mum will probably end up reading this.

Loxy

Pages 216–217

[Andrew Campbell](#) aka The Grim Reaper, in my opinion, never got the credit he deserves. Ask deejays or producers who their favourite deejay is and most will reference [Loxy](#). The dude is a master technician behind the decks and we often used to joke, if anyone has ever heard him mixing and clang... or as we say in the industry, sword fighting.

I met Andrew when I used to go to Speed. I would go every week and see Andrew with his DJ bag flung over his shoulder in the corner on his own, taking in the beats. After a while, I saw him at Music House and started giving him tunes to cut.

Soon after, he was a regular at our studio and that was when he made a few tunes, which I then started sniffing around and wanted him to be part of the Hardware camp. He made a [few tunes](#) with Dylan and [Keaton](#) and ultimately he and Ink combined for the [Quasi-modo EP](#).

Shortly after joining the ranks he teamed up with [Dylan](#), Ink, and Keaton and started the crew [The 4 Horseman](#), which was well received. I remember hearing both Loxy and Ink deejaying during the early Bluenote days and they were always championed as the nu-breed. When they joined Hardware, I gave them the *Generals* tag and made it commonplace, to have in-house artists play the prime two-hour slot at our label night.

I remember other producers from rival camps would come up and say they like how we promote our artists. That was always my plan; push our boys, our crew.

Andrew has OCD and I used to love going round to his yard and whilst he was out the room. I would move something which, I thought, there is no way on earth he would notice. Lo and behold, he would come back and instantly see it.

Chase & Status

Pages 217–219

I met [Will](#) and [Saul](#) when I started the DVD magazine called [Code of the Streets](#). It was one of the first of its kind when I came up with the idea. It was a magazine on a DVD and I did interviews with deejays and producers from the underground DnB scene, but also interviewed rappers and grime artists as well. I did four editions and wanted to take it further, but was restricted with time and finances and decided to pack it in.

I went to Manchester for a few days to interview Future Cut, who, at the time, were blowing up after doing [some tunes](#) for Metalheadz. We got onto what music they were working on and they mentioned these producers who had a studio a few doors away had done a remix of [20/20](#) (which a few years before was a big tune on the underground circuit) and that I should listen to it. Instantly my face screwed up as

I was thinking, “Who are these new boys, and why are they touching a big riddim like 20/20?”

After assuring me the remix was good, a few days later I heard it. I think it got sent to me via a CD. As soon as I heard it, I thought it was a winner and a few weeks later the boys came down to London.

From the get-go I was impressed with their attitude. Even though they loved DnB, they did not want to be restricted to that genre. And something said to me, “They’re going to blow up.”

I think [Zinc](#) via [Bingo](#) was the [first label](#) to put out their music. But Hardware was def the first for the initial DnB productions. They went on to do an [EP](#) for the label and a few collabs with other in-house artists. Eventually, I think partly due to their great production and the variety of tunes they did, [Andy C](#) signed them to [RAM](#) and the rest is history.

I am so glad they have managed to become a big electronic music act and it shows what I always said: in my opinion, DnB producers are def the best in dance music and most can go onto other genres and do well.

I like the fact that, unlike most dudes when they do interviews, they remember who helped them out. You can have all the talent in the world, but if you ain’t got no one who believes in you and puts you on, what good is the talent? Whenever I see Will or Saul, it is all love.

Vicious Circle

Pages 219–222

[Vicious Circle](#) was made up of four guys: [Dan](#), [Andrew](#), [Simon](#) and [Adam](#) VC. They were a group from near the studio in South London that, in my eyes, had great potential, but blew a bag of significant opportunities because they were too wild and undisciplined.

They came up through childhood friendships with [Ruxpin](#) aka [Aaron](#) from [Universal Project](#) (who put them on) and they used to hustle together to make money for studio equipment. They also collaborated regularly with other boys from their manor, like [EBK](#), [Nocturnal](#) and of course regularly with [Universal Project](#). They were part of the new wave of neuro producers, but had an updated version of that rugged, rolling Usual Suspects and Universal Project type sound that made their big tracks very recognizable.

They first came to my attention when I heard the [Jackhammer](#) remix they did for Universal Project. The original came out on Loxy's [Cylon](#) label, but after I heard it on dubplate getting multiple rewinds at one of my dances at The End, I told Loxy and Ruxpin that it needed to be on Hardware.

From then we formed a relationship, they put out an [EP](#) and a bunch of singles over four years with the label and also used to shell down the Hardware parties, usually with a bag of goons up and around the booth partying and going nuts. Dan even once tried to fight the sound engineer at The End... mid-set!

These boys were the kings of going on tour and creating mayhem. To say they lived to the motto of sex, drugs and DnB is an understatement. They were literally banned from a bunch of countries at one point, burning through booking agents four or five times during their time with Hardware. The number of stories I heard about missed flights, smashing up hotel rooms, fighting promoters and punters, lost passports and other madness, which I cannot print in this book. They were definitely from the Keaton and Usual Suspects school of partying.

A legendary story I will share with you is, that one time they played in Austria when they were being managed by Robyn Chaos⁵. The promoter foolishly had given them a mixed bag of all kinds of substances and, Vicious Circle being Vicious Circle, they'd done the lot before they even played. Booked for two hours, they ended up playing six or seven, and then when the promoter finally called time, he left them in the empty club with his close friends whilst he went to get the dough together to pay them — BIG MISTAKE.

Whilst he was gone, Dan and Simon convinced his people to let them behind the bar to mix up some drinks for the crew. They found some kind of antique Austrian goblet and proceeded to fill it with

⁵Anger Management. This incident took place either in 2006 or 2007. They played at Therapy Sessions in Vienna 27.05.2006. But also after releasing the Sharktown EP on 12.05.2007 they played a Hardware Night in Graz at Dom am Berg. I strongly believe this was in <https://www.future-music.net/forum/showthread.php?t=41568> says Vienna but <https://www.future-music.net/forum/showthread.php?t=40808> Graz. Dom im Berg fits the goblet story, as the location is an old cathedral / castle type venue. Robyn was playing in Vienna not Graz, Clayton says she phoned them and arranged the passports to be courier to Munich. So, she was not in Austria. It is also the last time Vicious Circle are announced in Austria.

every spirit they could find, before making each member of the crew down close to a pint of liquor, like some kind of ancient ritual. They did the same and within twenty minutes the whole group had gone crazy and started smashing the club up and doing all kinds of mad shit.

Apparently at one point, Dan went next door to a Turkish nightclub full of goons, wrapped in a shower curtain and holding a half-broken broomstick, accusing people of stealing his headphones - luckily no one killed him!

By the time the promoter gets back, he finds all his people passed out on the floor of the now destroyed club. Simon asleep on the stage and Dan outside passed out on the roof of his new Audi.

When Dan and Si came around from their blackout, they were being driven very fast down an Autobahn by two random Austrians. When they asked where they were going, the driver responded, "Munich, Germany." Problem was that their passports were back at the Hotel in Austria. So, they had to hold the driver and his girl captive at Munich Airport for hours, whilst Robyn and the furious promoter negotiated a courier to pick up their stuff and bring it to them. Seven hours later they caught a flight home and never played in Austria again.

I still talk to Dutty Dan on the regs, as he and I are both boxing fanatics. I am looking forward to catching a big fight with him one day at Madison Square Garden in NYC.

Universal Project

Pages 222–223

Aaron, Geoff and Ajit made up the initial crew and then it turned into a duo, when moved to Belgium. The Universal Project boys were part of that new school neuro era and were also very influenced by Keaton.

Aaron was the guy who gave me my name “Cligga”. Amongst him, Keaton, Ink and Loxy they had their own coded language, similar to Mobb Deep.

In my opinion, Universal Project were a talented duo, but didn’t put out enough tunes. Aaron lives in my manor and from time to time comes to my yard. Recently he started the Universal Project label again, so I expect big things. I think there is definitely a lane in today’s market for the stripped back rolling DnB.

Also, I got to give Aaron props for rewinding ANY man’s tunes that he felt like, whilst brocking out in the DJ booth at The End. If you ever saw him waving the white towel, you knew someone’s dub was about to get wheeled.

Chapter 21

Konflikt

Pages 224–237

I am so glad I can finally put this saga to rest and tell the real story of what actually happened between [Konflikt](#) and us. Over the years I have heard so many different versions. I've heard, that we took their tune by gunpoint, we stuck them up with a knife and all sorts of other crazy shit. The incident took on a mythical life of its own. To begin the Konflikt story, I have to take it right back to the beginning before I ever met them.

In the late nineties, the most favourite way for producers to send demos to deejays was to post a cassette tape or a CD to them. Konflikt sent out countless demos to Ed Rush, Groove, Doc Scott, and a few others. But no one actually took the time to listen to the demo. Most deejays did not even bother to go to the post office and pick up the CD if they got a red "Sorry we missed you" card left in their letterbox. I must admit: I might have been guilty of letting a few tunes slip

between my hands as well, due to not being on the ball and listening to everything that was sent to me. Back then, the best way to get my attention was a referral by another producer or deejay.

Anyway, a few months went past and not one single deejay got back to Konflikt. [Toby](#) aka [DJ Kontrol](#) (who worked at [Main Source](#), which was the leading PR company for DnB at the time), gave Keaton and Loxy, a demo from Konflikt on a DAT tape. They called me up and said, “You need to listen to a demo we just got hold of, these boys’ production and ideas are spot on.” I trusted Loxy’s judgement and a few days later I listened to the demo. Some of the tunes made my ears prick up, so pretty soon we flew them down from Scotland and were discussing signing some of their tracks to the label.

Black Thursday had happened a few months before, so the label was in the transitional period of getting new artists. We had signed Usual Suspects, Future Cut, DJ Reality, Ink & Loxy. We were trying to assemble a good camp to move forward with. [Kemal](#) and [Rob](#) were both from Glasgow, Scotland. Kemal had a techno background that instantly showed in the tunes. I am pretty certain [Roadblock](#), which was the first twelve-inch we put out, was on that demo.

Anyway, the demo did the job. It got my attention. The thing I remember about those first few demo tunes was, how polished and clean the production was. We flew them down a few more times, they finished off the demo tunes in our studio and the first twelve was put together.

Their debut release soon got the attention of all the circuit and

radio deejays. I always say that the baton regarding the Techstep or Neuro sound started with Nico at No U Turn, who was the godfather. He passed it to Optical, who then passed it to Konflikt and then finally [Noisia](#) got hold of it. Then after that, in my opinion, it really turned to shit production-wise.

Konflikt quickly followed up their debut twelve with another release called [Cyanide](#). By this time Rob and Kemal were in demand and had released music on a few different labels.¹ My favourite one (and to this day I wish I had put it out), was the twelve they gave Ink called [Animation](#), for his label, [Architecture](#). What a beast of a tune! Soon after, we added them to the lineup at the End Club sessions and put them on a European tour we were doing.²

Kemal and Rob did not really have much to say to us. Apart from our shared love of DnB, we didn't really have a lot in common. But I had learnt a valuable lesson after the betrayal of Black Thursday: don't get too close to the artists. Most of the artists coming through were a bit younger than me and I always felt a bit like a surrogate father-figure to them. That is why the mutiny cut me as deeply as it did. I originally treated the label like a family. I had learned from the experience though. My new motto was: treat it literally as business and you should be fine. So, with that in mind, when we first met Konflikt, one of the things which was established from the get-go was, that we would have right of first refusal on all the music that they

¹Not as Konflikt, but as Kemal + Rob Data or each on their own.

²[Konflikt @ Renegade Hardware](#), I can not find any tour dates for Konflikt in Europe.

wrote. Remember this point, as it will come up later in the story.

I knew, I could not literally put out all of the music they did. So other outlets had to be found. I insisted on having first dibs though, as I knew, eventually, they would make a few big hits. Also, I am a firm believer, that not every tune you do, needs to go out. If you look at the best and most prolific producers in the scene, the mantra is “less is more” and quality control is a must.

By this time everything was cool, and we took a few more tracks for [various projects](#) we were working on. Konflikt were, on fire at this point, but we were in no rush to ink a deal with them, because as long as we had first right to refusal, I was cool with the arrangement.

So, fast forward a few months later. One day I was in the office and Loxy calls me. He says, “I’m at Music House and you need to listen to this tune the Konflikt boys have done!” My ears instantly pricked up. But as he tried to play it to me over the phone, I couldn’t hear it properly, so I said, “Come down the office and let me have a butchers in the studio.” A few hours later I heard [Messiah](#). I instantly thought, “Holy fuck this is going to be an anthem.” It would definitely find a place on our [next label compilation](#). The trick was, to find a few killers on the next project which will sell the product.

Kemal and Rob were in town from Glasgow for a few days and I think they had a gig on somewhere in Europe, so they were down cutting dubs. I saw them a few days after Andrew played me the tune and we confirmed that we were going to put the tune out. I remember saying to them that I was not sure what it was going to

go on. It would be a twelve-inch, or a tune for our next album. But whatever it was, it was certainly coming out on the mighty Hardware.

Sometimes, it is hard to gauge if you have a hit on your hands. But we knew instantly the havoc this tune was going to cause. I told Kemal and Rob to not let anyone, apart from our camp, cut the tune, as we did not know yet, when it was coming out. I needed to sit down and come up with a plan of action before every man and their dog was cutting the tune, thus shortening its shelf life.

Before you knew it, my phone was blowing up with everyone asking to get a slice on dub. I was adamant that until we knew the release schedule and what it was going on, it was on lockdown. A few dudes managed to Jim Screech the tune via Kemal, but for the most part it was under control. It is hard telling deejays, who you normally give everything to that on this occasion, they cannot get the riddims. But we had to have strict rules regarding who could and could not cut it.

Certain deejays would frown on the fact that. Dudes, who they thought were beneath them in the pecking order, were holding it. [Ash-Attack](#) and [Profile](#) were my connects in Black Market Records and I used to give them white labels and test presses for the shop. We used to break bread together, so they had to get piece on plate. Then I would get the, “I heard such-and-such play it out, why can’t I get a dub of it as well?” It caused drama, but that is when you know you have a hit on your hands.

It was during this time that Bad Company were blowing up. They

were like a tsunami and the way they bust will never be replicated in the scene. We were not exactly on good terms as three-quarters of the group started down at Hardware and left on that infamous Black Thursday. So there definitely was no love lost between us. I would go out and half the night Bad Company tunes would be getting played. At first it made me sick to my stomach, but as time went on I thought, "I can find more artists." I believed in my A&R skills and the label was gaining a reputation.

I had heard a few rumours that Bad Company wanted the tune for their label, but I did not give it any notice as it was a few months after initially hearing and agreeing with Konflikt that we were putting out the tune. Anyone with half a brain surely realized, a big tune like that would have been signed. But that just adds to Fresh's blatant lack of respect for us as a label.

I must admit, I have been guilty of poaching tunes from smaller, labels. I would hear a tune and then I would hit up the producer and say, "Hardware is a better look, and the Brucie Bonus is that I can offer you gigs as well!" Very rarely did I get turned down.

I remember how I met Vicious Circle. I was round Keaton from Usual Suspects yard, which was known as the jump-off central. Everything he, Chris, Loxy, and Aaron used to do, was party and have pure gyal around. One night, I pop round, as my girl at the time lived in West London, so I had to pass Keaton's yard on the way there. I pop in and see Dan, Andrew, and Simon from Vicious Circle.

I didn't really know them — I think I had seen them once or twice

in The End Club or maybe they passed by the office to pick up some promos. Anyway, we get to talking and they want to play some tunes for me. Back then, listening to tunes was all I did, I had to be on top of shit. So, I hear [Jackhammer](#) remix and immediately ask who did the tune and what is it coming out on? Turns out [Jackhammer](#) was originally on Cylon, Loxy's label. I said then and there, I am not leaving the yard until I sign the remix.

I am not sure if Andrew was at the yard at the time. In fact, I remember calling him and saying, I need and want that remix. Zero fucks were given if I had released the original. I needed that riddim. After some slight persuasion, [Jackhammer](#) was mine.

Over the years I got more tunes from Dutty Dan and the crew. The point I am making is: I know tunes get hijacked, but I am not going to be a victim of that. Especially from Fresh who in my opinion, was a weasel.

There were a few instances when I wanted to backhand him.³ One time, I think in Café de Paris, I put hands on him or, as my mate reminded me, we had an altercation and he found himself on the floor.

Anyway, a few weeks go by and he tells Kemal, he wants the tune for his label. The cheeky fucking bit was he said, and I quote, "I am only going to ask you once." I got hold of Fresh and said, "Before I let you put that tune out, I will fling it out on white label. No way on

³Fresh has a different view on the whole thing: [DOA Thread 1](#) and [DOA Thread 2](#)

earth, after what happened between us just under a year or so ago, will I let you have the tune.” The arrogance of the dude made me dig my heels in even more and the battle lines were set. Who in their right mind would go back to a label you just left, after we assembled a crew back and try take one of its artists?

Once all the madness kicked off, everyone with an asshole had an opinion on what should happen to the tune. Some suggested I take the high road and let them put out the tune themselves. Kemal said at one of our meetings, that they had decided to put the tune on their own label. Obviously, that was met with a, “Fuck you,” from me. “That tune is coming out on Hardware,” I told him.

Now, it is not about the tune, but the principles surrounding it. Darren, Jason and Fresh had left us for dead, but then had the audacity to try and come take the tune of the year from us. Even now, when I think about it, I laugh out loud. You would have to be straight pussy to let someone handle you like that and the last I remember; I had some balls.

A few more months passed, and we flew Konflikt down one more time, as we wanted to sort out our differences in an amicable way. We went over to the pub across the road from our studio, which was our second office, and tried to thrash out a deal which suited both parties.

Our argument was, that we had a deal when we first started to work with them. We’d agreed, that we would get right of first refusal on their tunes. We put out their music and initially put them on the

map. It was only right, that the tune comes out on our label. Their counterargument was, that having a tune on [Bad Company](#) was a good look. I countered, that if they were that fussed about giving them a tune, then do them a new one, as [Messiah](#) was locked in our release schedule and that was not changing for no one. After a few hours, things reached a stalemate.

The following day Mark and I were in the office once again discussing how we were going to resolve the situation. We decided that he would go down to Music House and try one more time to talk some sense into Kemal and Rob. I decided that I was not the one who should go. If I went, things would go south very quickly. I have got the worst temper, whereas Mark is the voice of reason. So, a short while later, Mark went to Music House and saw Kemal in one of the cutting rooms.

DJ Ink, who happened to be at Music House at the time recounts: “We were all standing in the alleyway, as you do when at Music House, and Mark walked past us and went into one of the cutting studios. A few minutes later it was like something out of a cartoon. Kemal came running out the studio pursued by Mark who gave him a slap.”

Giles recounts it like Kemal saw a ghost and took off for his life. So, as they are running up Eden Grove towards Holloway Road, Mark shouted out, “Stop him! Stop him!” A good Samaritan obliged and tripped over Kemal, which made his record bag come loose and the contents come out on the ground. Out of all the things to fall out the bag was the DAT tape with the master of [Messiah](#) on it!

A few weeks after the incident, we were going Miami to the [Music Conference](#)⁴ and who do I see on the plane coming home? You guessed it: Konflikt. No words were exchanged as by then, the whole scene was talking about the incident. “Did you hear about Renegade Hardware? They hijacked the Messiah tune...” All the while the tune was still on dubplate, all the furore and talk going on just made it even bigger.

We released it on our [Essential Rewindz](#) label compilation and it went on to sell a ridiculous amount on vinyl. This was whilst that shitcunt of a forum called [Dogs On Acid](#) was going on.⁵ It was a good forum to begin with, but then the fuckboys and the wastemen started sprouting freely online, turning it into something which I avoided like the plague.⁶

After a while, I learnt that you need to have thick skin to go online and not look at all the abuse hurled at you on the daily. I did, and still do, have a viewpoint which is, if you can take the accolades, then you also must take the cussing and trolling by some random idiots as well.

I remember once I did an event in Canada and got invited to a radio station to do an interview. The first question the dude asks me was: “Is it true you took out a gun on the Konflikt boys and took Messiah?” At first, I thought dude was joking, but he was actually

⁴The 2000 edition took place 25.03.2000. So the whole incident took place in February or March 2000.

⁵In May 2001. Clayton registered his account on [03.07.2001](#)

⁶The first mention of Clayton and Messiah was in , [August 2001](#). Later [thread](#).

dead serious.

If I got a pound every time someone brings up that story, I would be very rich. When I tell people that when the alleged incident happened, I wasn't even present, they don't believe me.

My reputation precedes me most of the time, which sometimes works in my favour as people don't fuck around with me. But the honest truth is, I can count the amount of fights I have had in my adult life on one hand. I do believe in karma, so I make a point of not fucking with people just for the sake of it.

I know shortly after, Kemal and Rob stopped producing. I heard that Kemal was in the Peruvian rainforest doing yoga and meditating, and I know Rob is now back on the deejay circuit. Obviously, our split was acrimonious, but I still stand by what happened and would do the same thing again in those circumstances.

Mark and I spent months trying to sort out that situation, but in the end, as the old Jamaican saying goes, "If you can't hear, then you must feel."

I did an interview on Dogs On Acid a number of years ago and one of the questions brought up was the Konflikt situation.⁷ I said that it got dealt with on a street level — by that I mean — I only had two choices: go and take court action or bandulu the tune.

⁷[This interview](#) around 30:00min?

Testimonial — Nick Dettmar

Pages 235–236

Clayton Hines is one of those names you hear before you meet the guy. His name precedes him. Funny enough, Clayton and I didn't actually speak for about the first three years as I had always dealt with Mark, until one day this silence was broken via the wall hatch that he and Mark shared between their offices at TOV. I am not even sure if Mark and Clayton were talking at the time! Clayton busts through the wall hatch cussing about the graphics on the *Summer Slam* flyer saying, "WTF are there wrestlers on the front for?", turning to me for support and I was thinking: "Raa we've never even spoken before, and now you want me to back you?" We caught jokes off it and never looked back since.

The thing is with Clayton, although he does have a reputation for a bit of this and that, he is actually a very trusting person and is one of life's doers in a world of talkers. Men like Clayton have given people a platform, whether it be via labels and/or events and has contributed to this thing massively... and this should be commended.

Yes of course, there is money to be made, but over the years of ups and downs, this is thinned out to more than likely some minimum wage business. This thing we do is done for love, not money, and that's why the man will go onto new successes since leaving the scene. It starts with a passion, it starts with the unknown and without people like Clayton, we might not be where we are today.

Chapter 22

Music House

Pages 237–262

[Music House](#) played a pivotal role in shaping the jungle and DnB scene. It was situated in a small unit off Holloway Road in North London. It was a discreet, nondescript building, so if you walked too fast you could miss it. Walk to the end of Eden Grove, take a right down the alleyway and you would find [Chris](#).

Chris was the owner, working with [Paul Chue](#), along with his sons [Leon](#) and [Jason](#) (who later went on to record music under the name [Wookie](#)).

Music House was where deejays and producers would go and get dubplates cut. A [dubplate](#), otherwise known as an acetate, is a one-off recording of a tune. Sometimes, they would be a test recording before getting the tune mastered.

The dubplate culture was made famous by reggae sound systems in the mid-eighties, like Saxon, Coxsone, King Tubbys and Young Lion.

Then, the jungle fraternity started to use them as well. If a producer made a tune and wanted to test it out to a crowd in a party, he would cut a one-off recording and see how it sounded. He could then make adjustments on the mixdown before mastering.

I first started going to Music House around 1992 or 1993, when we launched Trouble on Vinyl. Most of the leading deejays would be gathered down there every day cutting the latest and freshest dubplates. I remember going there for the first time. I had arranged to meet Grooverider, which — to me then — was a big deal.

Groove was a leading figure in the scene, having been an integral part of the rave scene since 1988. It was like meeting a superhero, that is how much he was revered. Dude turned up four hours late. I look back and think how nowadays I would not wait thirty minutes, let alone four hours. But I was up-and-coming, and I needed him and other deejays to play our tunes.

In the very early days, I paid to get the dubplates cut, as no one knew our label. It was near impossible to get someone to spend 30 pounds to cut music they ain't heard from an unknown imprint. Pretty soon, I became a regular down Music House. It was the perfect place to link the deejays who were the regulars on the circuit.

Going up there at first was an all-day thing, as you had to get there early to secure a space in the queue. Unlike the dentist or the job centre, the queueing system was all over the place. If you got there mad early and did not leave your seat, you would get seen. Get there when its packed and decide to go shop, your place would get lost.

Man like Grooverider or Frost will come in and walk past you smiling with a load of DAT tapes.

Most of the time, seniority was placed on how big the deejay was and how busy they were. The classic excuse on a Friday evening was, “I have a gig to go to, can I cut in front of you?” You would say, “Yes”, thinking it was one plate, then someone would cut four or five plates. For me though, sometimes it was cool, as you got to hear what other labels and producers were cutting.

Many a tune was signed from label owners hearing producers playing the DAT for the first time at Music House. It was a good way to showcase your skills, as most of the deejays had labels and they were always on the lookout for new tunes. The routine was to leave the DAT tapes with Leon, or Paul (his dad), then it was easier for the deejay to listen to the DATs on the headphones and select the riddims what they wanted to cut.

The legend goes, that some deejay got caught by [Jumpin Jack Frost](#) cutting a dub without permission. Not sure how he got access to the coveted DATs, but someone called Frost and told him some dude was cutting V tunes. Frost called Leon, who passed the phone to the dude. Frost told dude he had to scratch up the plate. The last thing you wanted to be known for, was doing a Jim Screech and cutting tunes without permission. If you played the tune in a dance or on radio, you ran the risk of someone hearing it and reporting back to the camp.

Music House was also the place the labels would pass through and

drop off test presses of the new tunes to deejays. [Test presses](#) were a limited run of a tune, similar to a dubplate, but actually processed to the vinyl stage. Getting test presses from the top labels was a big deal, as most labels only did twenty or so. I remember when Bryan and Frost used to go down there and hand out the TPs. It was like Christmas had come early. Grown men would almost weep with joy!

I cannot overstate the importance of the role Music House played in shaping the scene. If you were cutting tunes and the tune was good, a top deejay would say to Leon, “Cut me one of those as well,” then half the promo was done already for that tune. The labels eventually got dubplate stickers, so when the deejay played the tune at a dance, everyone could see what label it was coming out on.

Certain days at Music House had certain genres of producers. In the week it was mainly the hardcore deejays like [Billy Bunter](#), [Dougal](#), [Hixxy](#), [Slipmatt](#), [Seduction](#) and [Darren Styles](#). Then you had the infamous reggae guys [Jah Shaka](#) and [David Rodigan](#). Thursday and Friday, it was the DnB boys. On Thursday, for some reason, all the big guns from the scene gathered to cut. Most of them tried to cut in secrecy: Andy C, Hype, Groove, Ed Rush, Optical, Fabio, Brockie, Bad Company, Loxy, Ink and deejays like that would try and lock off both cutting rooms at once. We used to call it *Secret Thursday* amongst the label owners.

I heard many a big tune for the first time at Music House getting cut and you knew what tunes would go on to be anthems. The hard part was, when the A-list producers were cutting your music and

the up-and-coming dudes got excited and wanted a piece. The usual bullshit statement, “You have to wait a few weeks,” would be reeled out. You had to be careful and most of the time you needed to drip feed the tune. The big boys wanted exclusivity, but I had my crew who I would sort out as well.

It was definitely a hierarchy system and for the most part, it worked. The big deejays used to cut enough plates and a few had tabs with Chris. The plates weren’t cheap. A normal, ten-inch plate was thirty pounds and the twelve inch was fifty. The reggae boys used to cut loads of tunes on the plate as it was more value for money. But the DnB boys only cut one tune on each side as you could get it louder doing that way.

One of the funniest stories I remember was, when a well-known English promoter had a disagreement with another promoter from Germany. I think they did an event together, wires got crossed and things got heated. I was sitting in the waiting room and the German promoter walked in, words were exchanged and out of nowhere the English promoter took out a sword from his jacket. Yes, you read that right: a fucking sword! I was shocked and froze against the wall. It did the trick though. Whatever beef they had, the German dude quickly owned up and said he would sort out the money due, then normal service was resumed.¹

¹Not many german guys went to Music House. I recall Bassface Sascha being one, someone from the Rawhill Crew or Meditation promoters... DJ Tobestar had access to Dom & Roland and Optical plates and did parties in Munich in 1998 and 1999. I could also be someone from Bremen or Cologne.

Coming Out of the Closet

Pages 242–244

I always wondered if there were any gay guys in the scene and how a scene so steeped in toxic masculinity, would react. Knowing the mindset of most guys in the scene, I knew there would be ridicule. The DnB scene reminds me of the football locker room: full of testosterone and having to be a man's man... whatever that means.

Quite a few years ago a female vocalist came down to our office and this subject came up. She was adamant there were a few in the closet within the scene, though she would not name any names. She personally knew two guys who were struggling to come out and through our mutual associations that confirmed my suspicions. When two producers who used to record for our label came down to the studio and came out of the closet, we were not surprised.

It was a subject brought up in our office before — were they gay and when would they come out? We suspected for years these guys were. One day dude came round the studio, and as we were all sitting there, he comes out with, “Just to let you all know: I’m gay.” We told him we suspected that, and we commended him for coming out.

It must take a lot for someone to make that leap and open up like that to their peers, especially in this scene. It also had to be a daunting thought to come out to black label owners from older Caribbean culture, where homosexuality was really frowned upon.

I cannot imagine what it must be like to have to hide your genuine

self like that. To not be able to feel what you feel openly or love who you want to love. I have never been uncomfortable around same-sex couples. I always felt it just was not any of my business. When I began shotting, it was in gay clubs. That's where the dough was.

At the end of the day, it hurts nobody for consenting adults to care for each other, no matter what their preference is. We live in a society and mix in scenes where the word "gay" is used as a joke or an insult and many still view homosexuality as a choice. Would anyone choose to be persecuted or to live in secrecy for fear of being ostracized? I do not think so. I have no problem at all with who people want to love, as long as they aren't shoving it in my face. To each their own. As a society, I think we all need to mind our own business more and judge less. Let people be happy. There is so much struggle in this life. If those around us find someone to come home to, at the end of the day, that makes their struggles worth it. Who are any of us to condemn that?

I have had my suspicions over the years and I've heard rumours about some people in the scene. I will not name them here, that's not my place. I hope one day, they feel comfortable enough to be their true selves openly and without fear of judgement.

Thankfully in recent years, it seems our society is becoming more accepting of the LGBTQ community and that can only be a good thing. When people are happy and accepted, they are more productive members of society and they feed positivity into the cycle.

I can relate in part to their struggles, as one of the only groups

even more marginalized than the LGBTQ communities, are the black community. I cannot imagine what it must be like to be black and LGBTQ as well. I can only hope the world becomes a more accepting and inclusive place.

Agents

Pages 244–256

Just saying the word brings a frown to my brow, let alone having to deal with them on a daily basis. Agents, in my opinion, are the parasites of the scene and an enemy if you're a promoter — for the artists on their books: a godsend.

In the early days, most agents were girlfriends of the artist, you had [Tania](#) from [UMC](#), who at the time was the partner of DJ SS and Tracey (Ton), who dated Kenny Ken. You can see the pattern: at the time, [Sarah](#) ([Groove Connection](#)) was the girlfriend of Fabio as well. I have got to give them credit though, as I am sure all of them were self-taught. Every agency, just like a label, has their peak periods where they are at the top of the game.

There are a few good ones to deal with, but most of them are failed musicians. Whether it be they started a label or were producing or promoting events. Shit did not work out for them, so the next gig was being an agent. I can assure you most of the modern-day ones didn't plan this career path. And up until the mid-two thousand it

was predominantly a woman-lead industry within a male-dominated music scene.

When I first got in the scene Groove Connection, run by Sarah, was the leading force, followed by Unique Artists, run by Caroline. Sarah boasted an impressive roster including many of the OG's of the scene such as Fabio, Grooverider, LTJ Bukem, JJ Frost, Micky Finn, Ray Keith and Bryan Gee, to name a few. With this heavyweight roster, Grooverider often referred to the agency as "The Gold Card Club."

Sarah was tough as nails. She was always so rude to me when I called up to try to book artists. It always used to puzzle me, why would she be so rude to me when I am attempting to put money in her pocket and obviously her artist's pocket as well. I took the abuse however, as I was a rookie and had to play by her rules or I wouldn't be allowed to book any of her artists at all and I assumed because she was a female in a male-dominated scene, she thought she had to go to extra hard. It took a few years of booking artists from her, before I learned not to take it personally when she let off a volley of abuse. She eventually chilled out with me. I suppose, me being new to the scene she must have thought, "Who the fuck are you?" It is almost like she wanted me to prove myself. Meanwhile, all I wanted to do was try and book the best and biggest artists and get my events on the radar.

After Groove Connection, Unique replaced it as the top agency and became, roster-wise, the Real Madrid of DnB. I met Caroline of

Unique Artists in early 1992, when I turned up at her office in Brixton and gave her some test presses. While Sarah just edged her in the beginning by the sheer quality of big DJs on the Groove Connection roster, Caroline had an impressive starting lineup as well, featuring the likes of Hype, Randall, Darren Jay, Donovan Badboy Smith, Simon Bassline Smith and [GQ](#). By the time Unique closed down, the roster was out of this world. It was the literal the “who-is-who” of drum & bass featuring top boys such as Andy C, Bad Company, Hype, Friction, Chase and Status, Pendulum, Ed Rush, Randall, Swift, Loxy and Ink.

I had a good working relationship with Caroline, but one day we got into it on the phone. I think, I was trying to book Bad Company and things got heated. Unknown to Caroline, I called a taxi whilst on the phone and was making my way to her office which was based in Fulham. I was livid. I had booked so many of her artists over the years and yet again, I thought, she did not value my custom and was disrespecting me. On route to her office things calmed down and I got an apology. I turned the taxi around and went back to my office.

When Unique closed down [2013?], Obi of [Echo Location](#) was there to take the whole entire roster, bar Andy who went to join Coda.² Obi was in the right place at the right time. He grabbed the top spot as the most prestigious agency and now he is reaping the rewards.

Obi (Echo Location) and I never really got on, which is kind of

²Coda changed its name in 2019 and is now [Paradigm Agency](#), still Andy C is on the roster.

to be expected. We got into it a few times, as I mentioned earlier in this book, but ultimately I have respect for him knowing where he started: with Grooverider as his first artist to now arguably having the biggest agency in dance music.

Obi went to University in Leeds, when he began throwing parties up there and before coming to London to start Echo Location. I am so glad, there is at least one successful black face in that industry and that he has risen to one of the top spots with that agency. I can appreciate now that all the times we went to war. He was just looking out for his artists.

Also emerging at that time was Mark ESP (originally from Germany)³ with his roster consisting of people like Marcus Intalex, Doc Scott, Calibre and a few other heavy hitters.

Mark ESP was cool when he first set up his agency.⁴ They're all cool in the beginning, aren't they? I remember, he used to ask me could I book his girlfriend at the time, [DJ Alleycat](#).⁵ And me being me, I gave her a few bookings just to do him a favour. I used to call them "mercy bookings". They weren't the best sets (usually first or last), but it got her name out there.

Yet again, everything changed as soon as his roster got bigger and bigger. Dudes got bigger attitudes and fees skyrocketed. I always

³Co-owns: [Skunkrock Productions](#), but moved to the UK in 1999

⁴<https://esp-agency.com/> He used to promote parties in Germany beginning in 1997, but moved to London in 1999 to set up ESP Promotions.

⁵I think this was the linkup for Konflikt to put out a remix on Skunkrock using the Konflikt name, which Clayton owned! [UFO! - My Personal Blackmail](#), one of the two only remixes with the Konflikt name. Also this happened in 2000.

used to say to the agents, “Do you want your artists to play at good shows which were high profile or are you just booking them out to the highest bidder?” Obviously, some muppet will pay over the odds to book artists as they are not looking at it as a business but more as a fanboy. This scenario usually happened a lot: you would ask a price for an artist and get told some crazy figure. But when you queried why the fee was so high, the response was, some other promoter offered and paid that. I was like, “Yeah, but that dude is going to lose his shirt on that show as the sums don’t add up and he is not looking at it as a business.” Also, you have to remember, most agents have this mindset, because someone is calling them asking for something, they automatically have a position of power in negotiating. Trust me, half the job is mind games. Or the best ones are like, “Deejay XYZ fee has gone up as he has a single out in the charts”. I would respond, “Well, when he is on his ass with no music out, does his fee go down?”

Honestly though, I can see both sides, as I set up an in-house agency which I ran for about twelve months. From experience, you cannot really force an artist on a promoter, unless you’re giving it to them for next to nothing. I often hear horror stories about powerful agents telling promoters, “If you want to book this headlining act you also need to a few other low-level acts from me as well.” I can assure I never pandered to that.

When [Mollie Collins](#) joined one of the bigger agencies, I know for a fact, promoters were told, if u want such and such, you have to

book Mollie as well and mind you her fee was four figures. I had a few agents call me complaining, but if the agent has you over a barrel due to you wanting his big acts, what can u do? Play ball or be like me and tell them to go fuck themselves.

Back to Mark: I was always perplexed when I would call for artists and he would play hardball with me. Considering how I helped his missus out in the beginning. A lot of agents have amnesia and favors get forgotten when things pick up for them. I was eventually told my events did not suit their artists.

One of the biggest dicks was [Fran](#) who worked for Primary Talent. Dude was a Hardware fanboy when he worked at [SRD Distribution](#) and never missed one of our raves. It is weird, how these dudes morph into Superman as soon as they get any position of power. As I said, most are failed at another part of the industry and want to prove their worth to everyone now. “Fran the Wasteman”, as I refer to him, styled himself on Obi of Echo Location.

Fran’s first job as an agent, was working under Obi, but was soon shown the door. Allegedly, something to do with a chick who worked there got his ass the sack. Apparently, he was sleeping with a girl from Obi’s office, who then threatened to leave the company. So in her stead, Fran left and landed at Primary.

Fran and I had a war of words one day at a [Nas](#) concert when he comes up to me, whilst I was with a chick and starts going on about some money I owed his agency. He could have called me on the phone, but he thought he would try to embarrass me in public.

He was there with Nick (Prototypes) and we were talking at the top of the stairs. My instant reaction was to push him. For a split second, it flashed through my mind to do it and had Nick not been there, I might have acted impulsively. I paused and realized, he would suffer a major injury or even death. I decided against it. The dick does not know how close he came to leaving that venue on a stretcher. Dude wanted to be Obi so bad. But he was never more than a poor man's version.

Another agent I detest with a passion is "Nick the Dick", another Primary Talent agent. I knew him for many years before when he was a wannabe deejay and producer. He was a Nico and No U-Turn fanboy and Break and Silent Witness took him under their wing. Nick started on Reprise⁶ (which was run by Howard) and eventually, he weaseled his way onto a smaller agency, Mainstage⁷

My problem with Nick began with my friend, Teri. I met Teri at one of my nights and became good friends with her and her boyfriend at the time, Khanage. She was like a sister to me, and a little while after she and Khanage split, she started dating Nick.

Eventually, she and Nick were expecting a baby. When the baby was three months old, I was speaking to Teri on the phone and it came up in conversation that they were struggling financially. Even though it was Nick's responsibility to help his baby's mum out, I went to visit her with Yoko and gave her money so she could buy nappies.

⁶<http://www.repriseagency.com/>, dissolved in 2011.

⁷Mainstage Artist, dissolved in 2012. Reddick joined Primary in October 2012. [Music Week article](#).

Around this time, Vicious Circle were on Nick's books and I wanted to book them for an event. Imagine this: I called him up out of courtesy to book Vicious Circle, they were my boys and I didn't have to go through him, but I thought, "Let me show him I am willing to play ball." It was for a gig in Birmingham and the fee he quoted me — 800 pounds — made me almost fall out my chair. This was all via email, so I call him up and ask, "Why is it a one hundred percent price increase from when I booked them last?"

A lot of agents hated the fact that I had personal relationships with many artists, which were built over many years, and it fucks me off, when an artist joins an agency and suddenly it's "Don't talk to me, speak to my agent," whose main job is to screw you over. I had gone out of my way to help Nick's missus when they were struggling. Now he was trying to extort money out of me to book my mates. Let us be honest, the agent's job is to fuck the promoter. My thing is, if you are going to fuck me, please use some lube. I was so happy when I heard [Calyx and Teebee](#) left Nick the Dick. It could not have happened to a nicer guy.

I had a few run-ins with Coda Agency too. I knew [Lucy](#) when she was going out with [Dave \(Spectrasoul\)](#) and we got on and used to have a laugh, as she was fresh-faced, and, I think just left university. As soon as she joined the agency as Tom's⁸ assistant, she turned into a bitch.

I was doing some events where I was booking dubstep artists

⁸Tom Schroeder, owner of Primary Talent.

such as [Skream](#), [Benga](#), [Casper](#), etc., who were big at the time, and she always used to try and palm me off with other artists she was trying to push. One day, she was very rude, and we got into a heated argument on the phone. I sent Tom an email saying, “Expect to see me in your office tomorrow dressed in black, and I won’t be carrying chocolates.” I was referring to — if you are old enough to remember — the [Cadbury’s chocolate milk tray man](#). Tom eventually talked me out of coming down.

Lucy outdid herself one day. Nick (Jungle Fever) emailed her and was asking about the availability of a few artists. She sent a disparaging email back mocking him, with something to the effect of, “It’s that dickhead again.” Turns out she made the mistake of replying to Nick instead of forwarding to Tom. When Nick told me, I was pissing myself. Talk about red-faced! She was apologetic after this gaffe, but it had exposed her a bit.

I did not realize how big Coda was, until after I went to their office and saw how large their roster was. In contrast to Lucy, I found Tom to be more pleasant and quite easy to deal with. One thing that baffled me about them was, they would ask you to make an offer when booking one of their artists. Often promoters would offer more than a figure they had in mind and by asking for an offer, they sometimes came out of the deal with much higher a profit than expected.

Coda were huge in DnB until a few years ago, until their rosters dwindled. They still have a few good acts, Bad Company being one.

While their DnB roster has shrunk over the years, I think, it's a case of quality of quantity.

The final time I had issue with Coda was, when I tried to book [Rebel MC](#) for a reggae and dub event called *Dub for Life*. I got in trouble with them as they tried to charge me double what my mate paid for him just weeks before. After we had it out on the phone, I was banned from ever booking any artists from that agency.

Probably the worst agent ever known to man was Clive (Evolution). I used to be very active on Twitter and I always used to cuss people when I was going through bouts of depression. I made a joke about the DnB Awards being at Electric⁹ and that with so many egos in the house, the club would have to open the roof to fit all their heads in.¹⁰ Everyone found it funny, shared it, etc. But Clive took it upon himself to hit up Genesis, a promotion outfit run by Lucy and Sam. I got on with both of them and Sam, as he is younger than me, often looked to me for advice. Anyway, Lucy retweeted or liked my tweet and Clive said to her, that it was better if she was not seen to be laughing at my jokes or she would be ostracized. She told me and I could not throw her under the bus so I couldn't confront him. Until this day he did not know I knew.

I knew of his name back then. But I first met him in Fabric when I was talking to [Chris Ball](#) (Ex-Metalheadz label manager). Chris and

⁹[Winner List 2013](#), 5.12.2013.

¹⁰<https://twitter.com/cliggahardware/status/408163568316469248>, "just been told the dnb awards will be held without a roof on the venue ,as management are not sure all the egos can fit through the door", 04.12.2013

I were standing there, mid-conversation, when Clive walks up. He stopped our conversation and introduced himself, which is fine. But you'd think he'd have left after that. My man stood there almost catching my spit. Chris and I just looked at each other like, "Who is this guy?" I thought, he was strange.

I booked [Gridlok](#) for my last Hardware party at The End. I had known [Ryan](#) for ages and thought he would be good for the lineup. Clive was his agent at the time and between the three of us we had discussed the gig and agreed Ryan would play. It is hard to say what happened from this point. I think Clive dropped the ball and double-booked Gridlok and did not want to admit his mistake. Either way, when the flyer came out for my event with Gridlok's name on the lineup, it all kicked off with Clive saying, I put him on the bill without booking him.

Agents are supposed to work with good promoters, so they want to come back for repeat work. Most want to bleed you and then move on to the next one. One of the only agents who I thought was fair, was [Robyn](#) who ran Anger Management. In all the years of doing business with her, we never had any drama. I think it might have something to do with the fact, that I knew her before she started the agency and also, as she is an artist, understands both sides of the scene.

I also found [Tania](#) (UMC) to be one of the nicest agents to work with. On her roster were SS, Shy FX and a few others. She and I never got into any disagreements, which was strange for someone like me

who was always bumping heads with agents.¹¹

One thing that always grated me, were agents who would take the piss out of promoters by getting them to waste their money booking hotel rooms that were rarely used. It got to the point, that agents began to hold most of the cards with regard to running events and promoters found themselves with less and less control over their own ventures. This was a major factor which led me to stop putting events on. I felt, I was getting less and less of a say in my own parties. My attitude is: my events are funded with my money and unless you are contributing financially to the cost of putting on the night, you don't tell me where the deejays go. Agents and promoters should work together, not hinder each other. When I look back, promoting is a mug's game. We end up creating monsters who end up biting us in the ass.

One agent I must make a special mention of is [Sahra](#), who was probably my favourite agent of that time. I first met Sahra when she was managing the Metalheadz events back in the Bluenote era. Around mid-two thousand she started her own agency, TMG, which consisted of the likes of [Calyx](#), [2Shy](#), [Teebee](#), [Rage](#) and a few others. We had a good working relationship and she ended up the Hardware agent for outside London and Europe, as well as festivals.

¹¹Claytons editor did not check that this is a repeated paragraph, or to phrase it better. Clayton wrote these paragraphs without realizing he already wrote about Tania.

Testimonial — DJ Chef

Pages 256–262

A lot of people presume that Clayton and I have known each other for years. I had known of the name from the start of the TOV days, but never met Clayton face-to-face till around 1997.

I remember going to The End club for the first Hardware with MC Rage, and Clayton was at the door. I had heard about Clayton being this larger than life character from South, who ran TOV (who's music I had been a fan of and bought on sight regularly) and had the tendency to be a moody guy who didn't suffer fools. I had been on rage to ask Clayton to get me on the promo list for ages and thought, tonight I will get a forward and I will ask Clayton to put me on the list (as I was doing the pirates at the time).

I will always remember him calling Pat over to the door. He was just looking down at the floor and talking to Pat, but didn't look up and acknowledge him or me at all. When I did finally get the introduction from Pat, I thought to myself, "What's the matter with this guy, why is he so miserable?" I remember Pat saying later when I mentioned it, "He's cool don't worry, that's just the way he is." Inside I was screwing thinking, "I've been buying his labels and going to his parties from day one, and he couldn't even give me a nod — what a dick."

Fast forward a month or two and I went down to the infamous Hardware HQ with Marly Marl, as he was collecting some promos

for the weekend. I thought, this would be my chance again to try and get on the promo list. I remember us parking up at the Sainsburys, walking across the road up to the shop front and going in and seeing the studio and office with Yoko, who sat behind the desk. Clayton was on the phone and looked over, grabbed a promo parcel, handed it over to Marl, exchanged a few words before getting back to his call and just got back to business.

I left thinking, "I'm still buying the music regardless." Then one day I bumped into an old schoolmate, who was working at a London pressing plant at the time. They mentioned they were doing a number of labels and that Hardware was one of them. From that point on, I did not need to bother with asking again and had the promos straight off the press before they did. It was by any means necessary in those days, to gain an edge. But I also knew when to hold certain things back on the radio.

I saw Clayton in the clubs a lot more from that point on. From generally being with Marly, Rage and [AD](#) as they were playing for Clayton a lot in those days. We would always just exchange a nod over the years, but we never spoke.

Over the years I had been taking my video camera out and capturing a lot of footage from clubs and events that the mandem were playing at all over the country. I was encouraged to create a DVD project. Remember this was pre-internet days when getting your face in the back of ATM Magazine certified you as somebody in the scene. I created a project called *The Inside*, where I had done interviews

with a number of deejays, producers and emcees and featured deejay sets up and down the country. I shot it, edited it and it was starting to gain a bit of momentum with people being interested in the idea. Then one day, I get a phone call and as soon as I heard the voice asking for Chef, I knew it was Clayton.

The conversation went something as follows:

Chef: "What's up?"

Clayton: "I hear you're doing a DVD about the scene, that can't happen as I'm doing one right now called Code of the Streets, and we are doing what sounds like the same things!"

Chef: "So what? That don't mean anything. The scene is big enough for us to cover it without crossing paths and affecting each other."

Clayton: "Well I'm just letting you know we are doing this thing regardless... and we don't want any confusion in the future!"

End of conversation.

As I said earlier, I thought, "What a dick, still, after all these years." I was thinking, "Did he just and try shut me down?" I was like, "Whatever..." I eventually saw Code of the Streets. It looked good, was packaged well and had a team of people involved. My one was done on my own and I ended up shelving the project due to not having enough cash, but I still have lots of unseen footage on those tapes.

My personal disinterest in Clayton grew as all the stories I had heard thru the DnB grapevine were manifesting. Over the years, I

knew I would never need anything from Clayton and vice versa.

One day an old friend from my manor, Kenny Levi (one of the OG's from the ends), came round my house and started saying we got a mutual friend and starts talking about Clayton and that he knows him well. He said, I should do some stuff with them and he would mention me to Clayton. I was like "Whatever...", and didn't mention my history with him.

One day I see Clayton and we got speaking somewhere. He mentioned that Kenny had co-signed me as someone legit and we should talk. We had a decent exchange and then slowly, from that point, we started to speak regularly about the scene, music, trainers and his food idea. Most of the time the conversation would start with, "I got this idea," and would always be a new brainwave to do something creative. But making money was always key.

At that point in time, I was not working and finding it tough. Clayton put a bit of work my way and he asked for me to do some work for him with Hardware at a few events. This helped me out big time in paying my rent. I never had any money problems with Clayton. Whatever was owed, was always settled. I got to go home with cash in my hand at every event for the rent and bills on that Monday morning. For that, I will always be grateful for Clayton helping me out.

Over a period of time, Clayton got to know me and confided in me, that he was thinking of ending the label and he was in a bad way. I knew, by then, about his depression and insomnia, something

I also had experience of. I said, “As a fan of the label I don’t think you should end it, but as I can see what it’s doing to you mentally. Time to move on to what makes you happy.” I thought, “Finally I get to work with a label I always respected as a deejay”. (regardless of my previous history with Clayton) “Finally I was playing at Hardware, had a tune coming out on the label — a label I had always supported and was one of my deejay goals in the two thousands — and now the label was about to end?” You just couldn’t write it!

Since that moment forward, I got to know the multi-layered, complicated person the DnB world called Clayton Hardware and deep down, he is like all of us. We get hurt when attacked, and we attack when hurt. It is the simple law of the jungle. People have a preconception of Clayton and they are probably right sixty percent of the time. But in business and friendship with me, we have never had a mix-up. People always said, “Watch out for him, make sure you get paid...,” etc. I always said to those who asked why I was working with Clayton, “He’s cool, it’s just the way he is. He don’t deal with me like that, so whatever gripe you got, that’s your bizniz, not mine.”

I make no bones. The labels played a big part of my love for the scene, as the TOV, Renegade and Hardware sound enriched our DnB musical landscape, with no question. I always admired how they marketed the brand, the artists, events, various sub-labels and how they were always present in all the DnB mags. Then, when it went online with cool artwork and lots of adverts, you couldn’t mess with them at that point.

Can't thank Clayton enough for giving me support in those dark times. And when I get frustrated with the way the scene operates, he's always a good person to have a moan and laugh with.

Big ups. Chef.

Chapter 23

Events

Pages 263–293

From an early age I was fascinated with putting on events. I would go clubbing and think about what it took to put something like that on.

When I was about nineteen, Mark and I started a sound system called “Playboy International”. It was a local sound and we used to do house parties in unused flats in the manor. We had a routine where we would print the fliers in Coldharbour Lane (the printers near the taxi station) and hand them out in the local community. We would charge five pounds on the door and put a makeshift cash bar in the bathroom. In the kitchen we served curry goat and rice. The best one we did was in a flat in Shardloes, Brockley. I used to follow sounds like [PC Mistri](#), 5th Avenue and Nasty Love, so it started with me trying to emulate them. The sound lasted a few years then disbanded, due to me grafting in the streets.

I was a regular at all the cool clubs at the time, like Family Function, Shake and Fingerpop, Soul 2 Soul at Africa Centre, Wag Club on Wardour Street, all the Westwood Dingwall Jams and Trevor Nelson in Vauxhall — I was there.

When we started the label, I used to call round the promoters and ask if they wanted to do label nights. We would hire a minibus or, on most occasions, a fifty-four-seater coach, then round up the crew and go to the event. Most promoters were surprised when we would pull up fifty people deep. We had quite a few nights like that. I have got to big up Jim from Atomics, as he was one of the first to book us on a regular basis.

The first Renegade Hardware night we put on was in conjunction with Sherry, who had the DnB and garage shop in Clapham Junction. The event was at The Cross, which was a club adjacent to Bagleys.

Our big break was when we secured a bi-monthly residency at The End in Central London. I used to go to The End and do a bit of grafting when it first opened. Many times, a few of the boys I used to knock about with, got thrown out. I always wanted to do a night in there, as the layout and sound system were spot on.

It was tucked away in Holborn in a discreet building. You went downstairs and as soon as you opened the doors, the heat and sound just hit you in the face. The deejay box was situated on the dancefloor. It reminded me of the gladiator days. If the crowd thought you were playing shit, they would let you know. The ravers could literally touch the deejay and it was daunting for a lot of producers as the

crowd was so knowledgeable. You had to draw riddims. The sound system in there was a monster. [Thunder Ridge](#) kitted it out. If you wanted to hear the full effect, you stood behind the deejay box right between the pillars.

When we first approached [The End](#) to discuss us getting a night, we were met with caution. The deal we got offered was, that we would hire the venue, whereas all the other DnB nights there were funded by the club. [Full Cycle](#), V and [Lucky Spin](#) had residencies already. So we teamed up with Nico, who was running No U Turn, to do a night together. They were leading the charge with the Techstep sound that was gaining momentum at that time. We called the night *Technology* and chose four deejays from each label.

The first event was in July 1997. It was a success and I think we pretty much packed the entire venue. Off the back of that, we got asked if we would do another one. Metalheadz had recently left the legendary Bluenote, so London was calling out for a night of underground futuristic beats in a venue with a killer sound.

The End club and our residency there was a match made in heaven. The club's layout was minimal and had that steely, hard look. It suited our music perfectly and I always instructed the light engineer to keep it as dark as possible. I am not sure why we didn't continue the collab with Nico. I was eager to do more nights as I was well aware of the cross-branding potential. If you could get ravers to buy your music and get music lovers to go to your night, it was a win-win situation.

I remember vividly after the first year of our residency, that the queue used to go round one block and then another block. It was crazy. The venue was expensive, but there was an advantage to The End making us hire the club. It gave us the freedom to book who we wanted and charge whatever we wanted on the door. I think, at the time, it was a standard twelve pounds to get in. But I sat down with Mark and realized, we would have to put the door price up to fourteen pounds or we simply would not make any money. We spent a lot on our lineups and needed to cover the cost.

During those early years of our residency at The End Club, I would always want Andy C and GQ on the lineup. The times that I could not secure the booking, I'd throw a hissy fit. But as we became more established, I learned people came for the brand, not necessarily for the headliners.

By this time, RAM, Virus, and a few other labels had residencies as well, but we had our loyal fan base. We had people who would fly in from abroad to every event we did. I have got to big up Vinny (aka Tracksuit Mafia). This dude would come from Belfast and fly back the next day for his Hardware fix. He ended up moving to London and got a job at the venue. That's what you call dedication!

Anyway, back to the door price. The management of The End were concerned that we would put off potential customers. I had faith in our event though. We would never cut corners on lineups and for us to make a profit. That was how it had to be. A few months later, they ended up putting the price up on all the other events there,

to match ours.

What also helped the Hardware legend to grow, during those times, were the CD packs we put out. We always recorded our events. One reason was to gauge the reaction to the tracks that were being tested on the night. And secondly, we knew how quick the brand would spread worldwide, if people abroad were exposed to the sound.

Many a deejay's career was built from the sets going out on those packs. Bailey the pussyhole's career was largely built on a set he did with GQ, where he dropped Dom & Roland's [Thunder](#). It got two or three rewinds and it sounded nuts on the recording.¹

We used to have a thing called the "Hardware Hall of Shame", where in the week after every event we would sit in the office and listen to the sets whilst working. Some of the deejays' mixing was all over the shop, we would hear some almighty clangs. Those sets would go in the "Hall of Shame" and the guilty deejay would get cussed.

I remember that one night a duo, who shall remain nameless to spare embarrassment, were DJing. One of them put together a monstrous clang on the decks and the crowd let out a gasp together. Some dude came up to me after and said, "What the fuck? I can do better than that!" I was at a loss for words, which does not usually happen. As I said: The End was a daunting place to perform in. There was no place to hide.

¹I believe it's this one: [Renegade Hardware - Live @ The End](#)

Whilst at the venue, we had the distinction of having the longest residency across all genres of music. We ended up being there just under eleven years. One thing I remember, is the trouble the deejays went through to get new music prepared for the night. Anyone playing usually went in the studio a few weeks before to cut fresh dubs. During the week leading up to the dance, producers would go AWOL, as no one really wanted to share the tunes they were planning for the night. Then, on the Wednesday or Thursday before the dance, Music House was wall to wall with deejays cutting for the night.

I do not know why it was, but soon the Hardware nights were easily the most talked about amongst the nights held at The End. I think it had a lot to do with our music policy. It was very much an anti-cheese environment and deejays knew that when performing at Hardware, they had to come with the ammo.

It was quite political at some points. For years I had trouble with the fact that certain in-house engineers had a setting on the EQ's specifically set for Andy C's RAM nights. When Andy went on, the sound suddenly went up quite a few decibels. I spoke to the club and got told that he wanted an increase in volume when he came on as the headline act. I was from the old school of thought where I wanted every deejay to have the same chance to rock the crowd. It is like having a deejay on a flyer in a bigger font than everyone else. I instructed them to set our volume the same for everyone throughout the course of the night.

Another thing that grated me was, one year when our event hap-

pened to fall on The End's birthday weekend. DJ Marky had gotten a residency and The End had given him his own night.² The club started to look at us as if we were not as cool as Marky's night. The proof of that was, when Ajay, who was the promotions manager, called me up and said that they decided to replace our night with Marky's event on the club's birthday weekend. In layman's terms: the club was implying that we weren't cool enough. Why? Cause we did not pick up turntables and act like a clown? It was their venue so who am I to make noise? But we did feel slighted, as we were in the venue at least six or seven years before Marky and we felt, that we had helped to build the legendary status attached to the venue.

I always said, you can have the best club in the world, but if you don't have the right promoter, it won't work. I admit that, at that point in time, Marky was the golden child of the scene. He was very animated on the decks and that suited him. But I frowned upon the circus tricks. I would rather hear good beats than have someone jumping around like a jackass behind the decks. In today's climate, everyone is trying to entertain the crowd with dance tricks, stilts, throwing Frisbees and juggling eggs, whilst doing three-deck mixing.

I remember DJ Ink and I going to Brazil for the first time. He got booked to play in São Paulo by DJ Andy, who was one of the biggest DnB promoters over there. Whilst we were in the club doing a sound check a few hours before it opened, Andy said to Giles, "Can you be a bit animated behind the decks?" I pissed myself at Giles' reply. He

²<https://www.residentadvisor.net/events/10444>, January 2006.

said, “I am not a circus clown, I am a deejay.” That was that. It was never brought up again.

When [Fabric](#) opened in 1999, it was direct competition. It was DnB on a Friday night in Central London, so we had to fight hard to keep our numbers up. But by then, we were on the verge of our second label compilation and had a strong following.

During our residency at The End Club, which lasted eleven years, I managed to get to know certain staff on a personal level. Liam and Ty were the managers and after a while, we got on well. I used to have a thing for Dominique, who worked in the Accounts Department. She was fit, but all the time I was on her case she had a man. After a while, I got the message. I would like to send a big shout out to AJ, Ryan, Nyeleti, Sarah, Victor, Lascalle, and Tony with the ponytail.

Two Monthly Events

Pages 271–273

The Big Rewind meets Way Back When “Old School Special” was part of the TOV monthly parties. The date was 17th August 2002 and the way it came about was, my good friend Nick said, he’d be good for between six and seven hundred raves based off his previous events he had done at Gracelands Film Studios on Old Kent Road (and the fact, that he ran Heat and helped Eastman out with Jungle Fever). Mark and I considered it and said, “Let’s give it a go.” The date was set and we got on the promotions trail.

On the night of the event the lineup was heaving... at least as far as old school lineups go. On the flyer we had the likes of [Andy C](#), [Swift](#), [Shy FX](#), [Brockie](#), [Nicky Blackmarket](#), [Kenny Ken](#), [Ashatak](#), [Skibadee](#), [Shabba](#), [Det](#), [IC3](#) and [Eksman](#). Andy ended up not playing, as he did not want to do an old school set and we replaced him with that fassyhole [Friction](#) at the last minute. Room 2 was hip-hop and R&B and featured [DJ 279](#), Lloyd Life, Get Rich Crew and a few others. Those guys ran their own promotion for that room through Delight FM and numerous other underground urban stations, which was both a blessing and a curse. We ended up getting a different crowd from our usual DnB heads, that showed up, and several rudeboys, who showed up with a different vibe.

On the night, the vibe was strong, the line hench, and the cars were triple parked, just like the old Colosseum days with Liberty and Exposure parties. Security at the venue was on edge and extra thorough with searches and it took ages to get people in. Eventually, around ten to fifteen guys got tired of waiting and took it upon themselves to rush the doors. It was a madness for a few minutes. Poor Nick was in the cash office at the time and thought they were coming for the money. He started stuffing fistfuls of cash down his trousers in anticipation of the door bursting open. Funny thing is, he had said earlier, "They have only got a bathroom lock on the door. That ain't stopping nobody." The panic was for nothing. The dudes just wanted to get in the dance and breezed past the cash office.

Up until that point, the night was pure vibes. But the door getting

rushed set off a chain of events. The security and club owner were spooked, so they went outside with a megaphone and told everyone in the queue, the event had reached capacity and there were no more entries to the dance. Mark, Nick and I were gobsmacked as we watched crowds of people just walk away. It was complete liberty, considering how hard we had worked on promotion. We watched out entire profit literally disperse before our eyes.

What added insult to injury, Nick's silent partner had recently passed away and he was short on his side of the upfront payments for the night. He neglected to tell me, that he had to hit up a local gangster for his part of the funds. Shortly after the door was closed down, man shows up twenty man deep and expects to get in. But the door was on lock and he was shut out. These are not the guys you turn away and they started to make noise outside. If there is one thing Nick is good at, it's the blag. So somehow he managed to work his magic and get them in.

A few days after the event, we were called into a meeting with the club owner. He told us, due to the madness that ensued, we would not be welcomed back at the venue. I was pissed, as it was not our usual crowd that showed up and messed up the dance.

Breakin Science

Pages 273–284

I bought Breakin Science in 2008, which, if you didn't know, is a

jump-up DnB event where the emphasis is about the emcees spraying bars and, in my opinion, the music is secondary. I was cool with the previous owners and used to help them construct lineups. So when the chance to buy the brand came, I jumped at it and wanted to add it to my portfolio of events.

I had experience of the jump-up scene as we used to do Trouble on Vinyl events. Breakin Science, at the time, was one of the main events of that sub-genre in London in the early noughties. It was very competitive within that scene: You had [One Nation](#), which was purchased by the [Slammin Vinyl](#) boys ([Mike](#) and [Grant](#)) from [Terry Turbo](#), who went on to make movies and also write a [book](#). Then you had Innovation which was run by Lloyd, Heat, Jungle Fever, Battle of the Emcees, MC Convention, Pure Science and Best of British, which was run by Ryan.

I remember when I bought Breakin Science, I had to go to Essex with 60.000 pounds cash in my rucksack. Not going to lie I was shitting myself. Even though I knew no one knew I was carrying that massive amount of cash, the paranoia set in. The whole journey was an hour, which seemed like three hours in my head.

The first event with me at the helm was a [joint event](#) with D&B Arena. The dance was already booked in with the previous owners, so we were committed. Brixton Academy is a 5.000 people capacity venue and if you don't get the numbers in, your pocket will get dented. The hire fee for the venue was outrageous. The building came as a shell and you had to pay 4.000 to change flooring from a concert level

to being event worthy. To me, it was a big scam. After you hire in sound and lights, you are already panicking. Mind you, this is before the lineup. We lost a bit of money on that event. But the event after that was much better as we managed to get Bagley's just before it shut down. Politics and gamesmanship played a part in that as well.

[Ray Keith](#) (who some people call "Ray Teef"³) had recently taken over [ATM Magazine](#) and was fortunate to get hold of a date in Bagley's. I called him up, as I had always wanted to do an event in there after raving in the space many years before, and I asked for the connect to the venue. I was met with an, "I am the only promoter who is allowed to do DnB in the venue." I was like, "Ok," but in my head, I knew he wasn't being forthright with the truth. I immediately called my mate Nick, who used to run the rave called Heat and teamed up with Eastman to do some incredible Fever events, i.e. Heavens, Area, and Fire, etc.

I met Nick when he used to do flyer distribution back in the day. He used to come down the office, and always reminds me that I never spoke to him. Mark was his connect back then and I was very standoffish. Over the years, I got to know him and now consider him a close friend. He is often the person I turn to and run my ideas past him, as I know he will give me an honest answer. I came up with the nickname "Mr. Wolf" for him, as he can solve most problems if you

³https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1710378375950407&id=100009347821762, "Who was the producer back in the day in dnb who lashed/stole other producers breaks with a brazen zero fucks given attitude..??? answerRay Teef sorry i meant Ray Keith...lol", 15.10.2016

are in a sticky situation (similar to Harvey Keitel in *Pulp Fiction*).

So, I say, “Nick, give Bagley’s a call and see if we can get in there... and put on your ‘Cockney-Wide-Boy-I-sell-cars’ voice.” Within fifteen minutes he called me back. “I’ve got two pieces of good news,” he said. “I got you the venue and no hire fee involved.” I immediately called Ray back just to gloat and let him know, there is always a back door and that I had secured a date.

I have been lucky over the past years of doing events where I never got leaned on by gangsters. Early rave era, 1988 to 1990, you would hear horror stories of doors being taken over, promoters being held by gunpoint and all sorts. Even in the speed garage era, it was common for promoters to pay protection money. Allegedly, a notorious bad man from Brixton used to get brown envelopes when any dance was on south of the river. It was, either you set him a change or the dance would get bum rushed and fights would break out.

The reason I mentioned this is, at the Breakin Science event at Bagley’s, there was a dude who was a top boy at the time and used to terrorize dances, for example going on stage with his boys with no passes, walk in ten deep and expect a freeness. Dude comes up to me just before we open the doors and says if I pay him a certain amount of money, he would regulate the dance, meaning to make sure there’s no trouble on the night. I happened to be standing next to [MC Foxy](#), who was listening to the entire conversation.

I have always had a soft spot for Foxy as I knew him before DnB.

He used to come to Leicester Square with his little crew and try to make money. I moved with an older firm and always looked out for him. I know he had his troubles with drug addiction and I commend him for getting clean and tackling the problem head-on.

Back to the story. I burst out laughing and said, “Foxy tell this dude who I am and where you know me from,” finishing the conversation with, “that’s what security is for and I don’t need you to police my dance, thank you very much.” I walked away leaving him open-mouthed.

One thing which makes me laugh, is the way jump-up is frowned upon by the rest of the scene. The irony is, every single prominent artist now — at some point — was doing the jump up circuit. That is how careers were made (i.e. tape packs). It is like as soon as certain artists get a bit of commercial love, amnesia kicks in and they forget themselves.

The biggest deejay in the scene, Andy C aka The Executioner, owes a lot to the so-called shitty jump up dances. I think it definitely has a place in the scene. It’s Saturday night party music which does not take itself too seriously, albeit I think the production could be much better. What it lacks in production techniques, it makes up for in vibes. I think if you are just getting into DnB, your entry point will most likely be jump up and as you get older and more clued up your tastes change and you might get introduced to harder techy stuff. Or you might find Liquid. It’s all DnB.

As I said earlier, the scene is driven by emcees who have loyal

fans up and down the country who can recite all the lyrics bar for bar. I was the primary instigator for what is, as we say in the scene, “a bag of emcees”, where the emcees outnumber the deejays on the night.

When I bought the Breakin Science brand, I instantly needed something to differentiate it from other similar type events. So I loaded it with different emcee crews. The most popular at the time was Nu Breed, which consisted of [Eksman](#), [Herbsie](#), [Evil B](#), [Foxy](#) and [Fatman](#), but also Shadow Demon which consisted of [Bassman](#), [Trigga](#), [Shaydee](#) and [DJ Sly](#). Once the scene saw how popular those two crews were, a few more got formed. The [SaSaSaS](#) we know now, was originally [Shockin](#) and [Shabba](#), then [Skibadee](#) replaced Shockin.

Talking about Skibadee. He was one who I had many run-ins with. One time he turns up late for an event we did at Coronet and it was the usual “Can-I-go-on-the-set-after” talk. This is the mindset of most of the emcees. Imagine a deejay turned up late and just said, “Is it ok if I jump on with deejay ‘blah blah’ after?” Obviously, he was pissed I didn’t comply to his wishes and the next day at Warning in Cambridge he shouts on stage, “Fuck Breakin Science.” Word gets back to me and we end up going back on forth on Facebook, his fans reported me and my account got closed down.

Give these emcees an inch they will take a yard. Ask anyone who knows me. I am the most accommodating when it comes to changing set times, as I do not want to stop a man from eating food. But not on the night with no warning. I had the same with [Trigga](#). I booked

him for a SEOne event. He turns up an hour late with bare excuses. I said, “I ain’t paying you and you can’t jump on the set after as it will put that artist’s set back.” Where do you draw the line?

An artist once said to me that I am one of the most disliked promoters and I was like, “It’s because I don’t pay over the odds like some promoters and I know the market value of what an artist is worth. I don’t let you lot take the piss.” He laughed and admitted those were the reasons. I know a well-known promoter who is revered by almost everyone because he pays top dollar, more the fool him. I am not here to be liked. It is not a popularity contest, it’s a business.

One of the most competent emcees from that scene is [Eksman](#). His business acumen and work rate are second to none. I watched him come into the scene when I used to book him for TOV at Colosseum, to now, where he’s got his own event (Overload), which I’ve seen him build up over the years. He just started the new supergroup Problem Central, with Evil B, [Logan D](#) and [Majistrate](#). More emcees should take a leaf out of his book regarding his work rate. To me, he is the best emcee from that genre alongside Evil B.

Which gets me onto the subject of Evil B. To me, he was one of the more polarizing characters out of the Breakin Science emcees at the time. He’s undeniably one of the most talented emcees around, but dude used to love himself so much, I gave him the nickname “Ego B.” I am sure he’d have had his ribs removed to suck his own dick if he could.

It really showed how fake everyone was when I sold Breakin

Science. [In 2017] I used to speak to the emcees on a regular basis. Once I sold the brand my phone stopped ringing. I could see they all played nicely to see what they could get out of me.

Probably the emcee who I clashed with the most, and took a personal dislike to, was [Fatman D](#) (or as some call him, “Crackman D”⁴). Allegedly he got that name as he used to smoke hard food. Fatman D and I have had our beef for years. It is nothing new. More than anyone, he was ecstatic when I sold the brand to Bridge⁵, as he would be able to finally jump on the lineup. The entire time I owned Breakin Science, he played once... and that was only because Eksman asked me to put him on. There is definitely no love lost between us. Dude thinks too highly of himself with not enough talent to back it.

When I bought Breakin Science, I immediately called DJ Kane and asked him if he wanted to be involved. He knew the scene better than me and I needed someone who lived and breathed it. By then my love of DnB was waning fast and it took a lot of effort for me to stand in the dance for more than twenty minutes listening to a lyrical onslaught, which most of the time, I didn’t know what the fuck was being said.

As I said, at one point the deejay might as well of gone home. Not many emcees on that side of the scene knew when to let the music breath. It was head down, “I have one hundred and one bars that I

⁴https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2271092046545701&id=100009347821762, “I have hope...if Fatman aka crackman d ,can make it as a emcee and get paid for spitting fuckeries for the last 20 years,my dream of eventually being a astronaut is still alive..□□”, 01.04.2019

⁵Bridge Atterbury, owner of [Deftickets](#)

need to let off”, regardless of the breakdown in the tune. It got to the point the deejays started to turn down certain emcees’ mics and it was almost an us-against-you mentality.

Also, the young crowd turned me off. I used to joke that most of them had three teeth and three ASBOs (an [ASBO](#) is a ban given by judges for anti-social behaviour). In the early days, I literally used to go around with DJ Ink and a few securities and find the little firms of rude boys who were snatching chains and wallets. For about a year and a half, it was an epidemic. One incident which made me laugh was, this same firm went to an event up north and started their fuckeries (I think it was a Random Concept Weekender) and the security got hold of them.⁶ My approach was different: I would just tell them if you’re in here to make money by shotting (a.k.a. selling drugs), as long as the drugs are real, I don’t have a problem with that. But if you’re here to mash up my dance by robbing people, then me and a few securities will take you in the back and fuck you up.

The message soon got out, that Breakin Science was not easy pickings. I saw a few of the boys I approached on road a few times and it could have easily kicked off, as I was on my Jack Jones, but I think they respected me as I told them do what you are doing, but you’re fucking up my paper by robbing kids in here.

⁶https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2050399358614972&id=100009347821762, “can someone jog my memory,i need to know for my book,what event and year was it those boys who used to snatch chains went to a weekender up north and the security got hold of them and stripped them down to the boxer shorts and took pics ..??”, 11.06.2018. It was Random Concept on 29. November 2008 at Rollerworld, Derby.

A guy of the main firm of youts whose names were always getting hailed out to me for doing that, is an emcee now on the circuit. For a while, it did not sit well with me as I thought, “Hold on, you and your boys go around robbing these ravers, and then you get elevated to being on stage?” It almost says: do fuckeries and you will get rewarded. Turns out this particular emcee knew them, but only sparred with them and wasn’t directly involved. In all that, joke is, I found out dude used to live literally round the corner from me and when I see him now it’s all love.

An incident that comes to mind which shows the inept attitude of fellow promoters was a meeting I had with the top brands of the time. For the purpose of this book we will call it the meeting of “The Big 5”.

During the early to mid-two thousands, the scene was very spilt as far as promoters coming together. I wanted us to get together to have a meeting to try and come up with a way to keep the wages in check, as year-on-year it was spiralling out of control. I proposed a two tier system for booking deejays. If everyone knew they were getting the same money, it would be hard to kick off and cause drama.

We all gathered at a restaurant next to Fabric and tried to thrash out a deal where we all would benefit in some way. In attendance were [Yankee](#) who owned Breakin Science, Mike and Grant from Slammin and One Nation, Mark and me, Nick from Jungle Fever and Lloyd from [Innovation](#).

We had the power. Without our dances man’s not playing. What

we were aiming to set up, was a sort of promoter's union where wages paid out would have a maximum cap to keep costs reasonable for everyone. But as usual with the scene, being the fuck up that it is, everything that was agreed on Friday was abandoned on Monday morning because every promoter had a different relationship with deejays and emcees. Everyone went back on their bullshit. That example showed me right there, unity with promoters in the scene would never work.

I owned Breakin Science for about five years whilst still doing Renegade Hardware events. Eventually, the music got to me. I was never from the school of twenty-five emcees and twenty-five deejays on stage together.⁷ When I announced Breakin was up for sale to potential bidders, there was Lloyd who ran Innovation and Bridge who ran Def Tickets. I was talking to both parties, but after Lloyd first approached me and offered me literally crackhead money for the brand, I then approached Bridge.

Leading up to this, I had been talking to Lloyd for a few weeks and

⁷https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1914682308853345&id=100009347821762, "I have seen a few debates recently about the importance of emcees in todays market...best way to describe them ,is like being the side chick in a relationship ,you see her when you see her if you dont you dont, she knows the drill□□ unless its top jump up events the importance of emcees are not that important for promoters to be shelling out extra dough,a good host will suffice someone who knows when to shut up i am partly responsible for the influx of emcees on jump up line ups,when i ran breakin science i started the 24 emcees b2b2b as thats what the ravers wanted that part of the scene wont change and the otherside theres 101 emcees who look and sound the same its very generic,thats why when i heard Andy Degs i was like thank god someone different with originality hence why dude will go far,i remember him saying someone said he sounded 2 different,i was like dont change that, my ears pricked up cause you were doing something against the grain,who cant hold a mic and fire syllables like a madman for 3 minutes without breathing,not exactly hard", 5.10.2017

had made a verbal commitment to sell to him. When I reneged on the deal, as Bridge had offered me more money, Lloyd threw a hissy fit and said he was going to sue me. I asked on what grounds did he plan on taking me to court, and he said we had a verbal contract.

I should get a knighthood or a statue in my honour for what I did if I had sold to Lloyd. The jump up scene would have been fucked and Lloyd would have had a monopoly. That did not sit well with me. It is almost like he tried to bully me into selling the brand because we had a so-called verbal agreement. I would hate to think what the landscape would be in London if Lloyd did manage to buy Breakin Science off me.

Eventually a few weeks later I sold Breakin to Bridge and his brother [Inter](#). From time to time I still check out a few Breakin Science events, but it's gone entirely a direction that is not my cup of tea music-wise. But it still has its fan base.

Hardware MCs

Pages 284–285

Can someone please tell me a successful emcee who has come through in the last ten years, who has not come from the hardware school of emcees? From [Verse](#), [SP](#), [ID](#), [Rage](#), [AD](#) and [2Shy](#)... they all started their residencies at Hardware.

VERSE - I first met Verse when he was an emcee at a Leeds event called Dope [D.O.P.E (The Department of Progressive Energy) at The

Mex, Leeds]. He later went on to have a successful stint as [Pendulum's](#) emcee.

SP - I met SP via Friction. He has turned out to be one of my favourite emcees and I'm proud to see how far he's come from where he started.

2SHY - I met 2Shy at Fabric. As soon as I heard him, I knew he fitted the hardware criteria. He was a resident for us until we had a fall out late two-thousands.⁸

ID - I met ID via Friction as well. He ended up being our resident emcee for a few years before he went off to work with [Sub Focus](#).

RAGE – I have known Patrick for years. He was one of the original Hardware residents from when we first started our residency at The End. Most people know him now for the work he does with [Chase & Status](#).

AD - I met AD as he was good friends with Rage. He was one of Hardware's longest resident emcees. Alvin is my homeboy, even though he supports that shit team from North London (Arsenal).

STAPLETON - I met Robert when I was checking out some DJs in the late nineties. I went to a club where I heard him emcee and liked his style. He was part of camp ever since.

I'm proud of the fact that these guys learned their trade and honed their craft at the hardware nights.

⁸<https://twitter.com/cliggahardware/status/28723583679> "the hardware family want to thank 2shy mc for the last 10 yrs of reppin the beats..we wish you all the best in your new venture", 25.10.2010

The Final Chapter

Pages 285–289

The Final Chapter event at The Coronet Theatre [06.02.2016] was possibly the best in the long list of events we have put on over the years.

The way it came together was very organic, I came to the decision mid-2015 we were going to close down the label and stop events. By then, I was totally disillusioned with the scene and by then the industry changed.

As far as events go, being an independent promoter was harder than ever. Agents and deejays carved out exclusive deals with super clubs (i.e. Fabric) and it was getting harder and harder to put a good line up together without being told by agents “such-and-such has an arrangement with a particular club.” It pissed me off. Where were these clubs when DnB was on the up and independent promoters were building the scene from ground zero?

As per normal, I sat down with my inner circle which consisted of Ink, Chef and my good pal Ramaaz. I explained to them I’d had enough, and I thought it was the right time to call an end to the events.

We originally decided to do a one-night event on the Saturday, and we just advertised it was going to be our last event. We would have sixty deejays playing across five rooms. I was always known for doing stupendous lineups and started the trend of the infamous

back-to-back sessions at most big Hardware events. We put up a post on social media which was more of a pre-flier.⁹ We advertised no names, just that it was going to be our last event and the date. The response was overwhelming, and I was surprised at the interest in the event. Then again, I very rarely see how much the label is appreciated as I am always grafting from the inside and do not see the love and respect the label garners.

We put tickets on sale a few days later and within a few days, we sold a few thousand. Being in the game for so long, you can tell when an event is growing through word of mouth and people sharing the event flier. We sat down and plotted the lineup and my thought process was, I wanted the biggest lineup to hit London town (aka The Big Smoke) for ages.

Remember, we literally sold out the event without naming one artist. I think people knew when we did events, our lineups were always hench and on point. A lot of nostalgic people, who had been following the labels event since the late nineties, wanted to come out and pay homage to the brand.

Originally, the line-up I had in mind was mostly in-house artists who recorded for the label and played religiously at our events over the years. Then I got deejays hitting me up asking to be on the bill. That was when you know you have a big event on your hands.

⁹<https://www.facebook.com/renegadehardware/posts/10153586087968210>, <https://www.facebook.com/renegadehardware/photos/a.10150702281278210/10153584449043210/> and <https://www.facebook.com/renegadehardware/posts/10153651032273210>

As the weeks went on, we sold out literally all 3.000 tickets for the event. A few days later the club called me and asked if we wanted to make the event a weekender, meaning doing both Friday and Saturday night. After thinking it about it for a few days we said, “Why not?” The idea was to make the Saturday night mainly playing the classics from 1995 to 2005 and Friday was going to geared towards the new school from 2005 to 2015. When we eventually put up the lineup, yet again, the response was overwhelming. We knew we were on the way to a stupendous event, the lineup eventually consisted of a ridiculous amount of deejays.¹⁰

On Friday night we had: [Pendulum](#) (DJ set, [El Horner](#) & [MC Verse](#)), [Spor](#), [Loxy](#), [Ink](#), [Audio](#), [Maldini](#), [Jade](#), [Mindscape](#), [Mampi Swift](#), [Mob Tactics](#), [Drumsound & Bassline Smith](#), [North Base](#), [Skitty](#), [Gremlinz](#), [Nolidge](#), [Genotype](#), [Verb](#), [Meth](#), [Double O](#), [Razor](#), [Mantra](#), [Ruffhouse](#), [Overlook](#), [Clarity](#), [Storm](#), [Stretch](#), [Dextrous](#), [Battery](#), [Flight](#), [DBR UK](#), [Fox](#), [Obi One](#), [Kontrol](#), [Adi J](#), [NC-17](#), [Chris Inperspective](#), [Inter](#), [Andy Skopes](#), [Network](#), [Handy](#), [Lex TC](#), [Skyz](#), [Soundia](#), [Kyrist](#), [Medik A](#), [Sweetpea](#), [Quadrant](#), [Spindall](#), [Kalm](#), [Malx](#), [Miss Represent](#), [Noize Complaint](#), [Arcane](#), [Ill Tempa](#), [XTM](#), [Trouble](#), [Manic](#), [Terminal State & Zero Zero](#), [Voytek](#), [Antagonist](#), [Lady Su](#), [Stapleton](#), [K-Eye](#), [Mantmast](#), [MC AD](#), [Blackeye](#), [IC3](#), [Nuclear MC](#), [LX One](#), [Hijak](#), [J-Swif](#), [Illmatika](#), [Agman Gora](#), [Remidy](#), [Jamie White](#), [Big Luke](#), [Jamie Bashington](#).

On Saturday night we had: [Loxy](#), [Ink](#), [Optiv](#), [BTK](#), [Optical](#), [Doc](#)

¹⁰<https://www.facebook.com/renegadehardware/photos/a.10151284654743210/10153769760313210>

Scott, Grooverider, Dom & Roland, Klute, Digital, Spirit, ANT-TC1, Keaton, Gridlok, Chef, JJ Frost, Bryan Gee, Gremlinz, Cold Fusion, Stealth, Vicious Circle, Nocturnal, Universal Project, Tech Itch, Manifest, Volatile Cycle, Klax, Trilo, Chris Renegade, Memtrix, Adi J, Robyn Chaos, Khanage, Unknown Error, EBK, Subterra, HLZ, Philth, Symptom, Chris Intaface, Callide, Melinki, Deeroy, Fuzion UK, DJ E, Future Thinkin, Killbreak, Staunch, Mechanizim, Able Danger, Teknola, Social Security, Miss EP, Triple Sickz, Bradders Brown, Quarmz n Quarrelz, PLO, Escape, Tristan Teraform, Bonnie Blaze, Zootweaver, Red Lebanon, Tracksuit Mafia, Shinobi, Maurice, Magic, Damage, Squif, GQ, Rhymetyme, ID, Stapleton, MC AD, Fokus, Blackeye, IC3, Basslline, Rumble, Hijak, Blacka, Kryptomedic, Semtex, JC.¹¹

The best part of the event was the amount of people who flew in from all parts of the world. We had ravers from Australia, America, Canada, all parts of Europe and beyond. It was a humbling experience. Seeing everyone congregate for one final time was a good feeling, but I did not get to enjoy any part of the weekend, as I was in work mode.

I got to the venue at 3 p.m., as I had to set up the merchandise stall. Most of the rest of the day was spent in the production room with a radio on me, it was a madness. I didn't stop for more than two seconds. I was completely rushed off my feet making sure things were running smoothly, paying artists, etc. Before I knew it, the night

¹¹This lineup was copy and pasted. As Clayton already mentioned, Gridlok did not play on that night.

had successfully wrapped up and all had gone home.

Testimonial — Adi J

Pages 290–293

In 1998 I moved to Amsterdam to start a new life. Jungle was big in Tel Aviv, but I felt that the Bassground weekly Friday night was at peak and I needed to go forward. By then I already had heard about Clayton a lot from my friend Vinne Medeley (RIP), owner of SOUR Records and Emotif, and also helped run the Movement nights at Bar Rumba in London. He used to say, I should be a Hardware girl as it's more the direction my music was going... and so I did. I started following the label, buying the releases and going to the club nights.

I was often introduced to Clayton but never dared to really talk to him. I was always front row when Loxy, Ink and Keaton were deejaying, as I couldn't get enough of the music and vibes. I remember coming to UMC in America.¹² Clayton could not believe I had made it all the way there. I was so into the Hardware music and, for me, Clayton was the glue of all these producers, DJ's and fans. He was one of a kind.

At some point, I had made a connection between the Mazzo club and Hardware, as I wanted to bring Hardware names to parties in the Netherlands. One night in particular was, when Clayton came

¹²Ultra Music Festival from 25th March 2006 in Miami did not have a Renegade Hardware DJ playing, but a Renegade Hardware night took place in 27.03.2006. <https://www.residentadvisor.net/events/11506> I believe this is the date.

to town on a stroll, coming into the club and introducing me to a kid called Friction. “He’s OK, this white boy,” he said, “he can go places.” I think he (Friction) must have been seventeen or eighteen back then.¹³

I started getting in touch with Yoko when I would get to London each time. I felt a bit closer to Loxy and Ink, and also started getting Hardware bookings in Tel Aviv. The boys loved it. Clayton went once and hated it. The first time I got to play at Hardware was after Yoko and Clayton listened to my mix and thought, “You know what? Fine. Let’s give her a set!” I can’t forget that night!!!¹⁴ After raving at Hardware for a while, and partying at The End, I was finally on the other side of the decks. A dream come true.

I went into the club. It was still early. Clayton caught me and asked how I was doing. “You know,” he said, “the only woman I ever let play here is Storm,” (Jayne, who I knew very well personally already for years), “you can’t fuck up, Adi.” He said, “You only ever get one chance. You need to stand up for the level.” I think he doubted it... but I did. From then on, I have played for numerous Hardware nights and joined the family representing the label.

Needless to say, that since the day I met Clayton, he was my mentor, my shoulder to cry on, my mirror and the most stable pole I would even lean on. My big brother!

Getting to travel and party with the crew, I got closer and closer to

¹³This is the first entry with Friction in Amsterdam I could find. 27.07.2001

¹⁴She played first on 04.04.2008.

Clayton. I used to come down to the office and see all the artists come in and out, go to lunch at Hot Stuff restaurant in Vauxhall (when it was still a tiny place) and back to the office to collect fresh vinyl and to listen to tunes with Clayton for hours in front of huge old speakers in the studio. When the big metal door rolled up you were in a different world, where music dedication had no limits. You would come out of there, after a few hours of daylight left, so much had happened and you'd learnt another lesson in the history of DnB.

I met [Mathijs](#) of [Noisia](#) in 2005. We used to run a few nights all over the Netherlands back then. Retox, Bassground, Clash of the Titans and Hostile Takeover. He played me some Noisia tunes they had worked on and I was hooked. I had never heard something so clean and polished, but also raw at the same time. The boys were crazy for Hardware and wanted to meet up with Clayton. They were young, talented and white... very white, just like me. Clayton and I were closer by then and Mathijs asked me, if I could arrange the meeting and come down with them... we agreed to do it in London.

The boys came down to Hardware to party and you could tell they were in shock. Hardware was intense! It was like a magic pill, that once you have tasted it, you want to have more and more. It was like nothing else. I met the Boys again two days later early in the morning to go to the Hardware office together. We took the London Underground tube together and on the way, there were so many questions, "Could you please come in with us? What do we say? You think he'd like it? What if he doesn't, we heard he's a gangster..." "Of

course he isn't," I said, "I know him so well." They were so shook at the thought of meeting him, that. when they were walking up to the studio. they asked, "Would he be ok with us shaking his hand?" Clayton only recently learned of this and he laughed for days.¹⁵ I never told them the first time I met Clayton at the office, he was late by two hours. Then he showed up in a black BMW with black windows telling me he never even had a license to drive in the UK. LOL

They knew their music was amazing and fresh and they had a few ideas they wanted to talk to Clayton about, but they were terrified. The rest is history! [Messiah](#) remix..., etc. I know Clayton well, so I could tell he could hear, on those big old speakers, how well the music is produced, how new that vibe was, and I could also tell he already had a plan! Clayton always had a plan when it came to music and the Hardware label.

¹⁵https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2049047292083512&id=100009347821762&comment_id=2049055452082696&reply_comment_id=2049058342082407, "i am getting a few deejays and a few industry heads to write a few paragraphs on how we met and any funny stories Adi Lev story on how i met noisia is hilarious", 09.06.2018

Chapter 24

Metalheadz at Bluenote

Pages 294–303

The Bluenote was situated in Hoxton Square, East London, an area which, at that time, was, in the early process of gentrification. The three-storey building was restored and turned into a club, restaurant and art gallery. Metalheadz started their legendary Sunday Sessions at the club in July of 1995.¹

At the time, having a club on a Sunday which started at 7 p.m. and closed at 1 a.m. was unheard of. They proved that it could work and pretty soon each event was road blocked. The original Metalheadz line up was Clarky, Marly Marl, Loxy, Ink, Peshay, Kemistry & Storm, Groove, Fabio, Doc Scott, DJ Lee and Goldie with GQ, Cleveland Watkiss, Justice and Flux on mic duties.

Goldie hit the ground running with the night and pretty soon it attracted most of the bushy artists at the time. I would see David

¹[RBMA feature](#)

Bowie, Bjork, the Gallagher brothers and a few others mingling in the club with the rest of us mere mortals on a weekly basis.

The Bluenote played a big part in how I chose to shape the Hardware nights at The End club. The night was a testing ground for new tracks and the sound of Techstep was just starting to gain momentum. If Grooverider or Doc Scott played your tune, you were guaranteed to get phone calls in the week from other deejays asking, if they can cut your tunes as well.

It was a constant battle with the deejays. As most labels got promo stickers for their dubplates to advertise the track that was coming out on their imprint. But some deejays covered up the label and artist name so that other deejays could not find out the details and get the tune for themselves. I made a point of saying to deejays, that if they wanted to cut our tune, they needed to have one of our dubplate stickers on it. I was not giving tunes out to the guys on the circuit just to get them props. The labels and producers wanted and needed to shine as well.

Walking up the steps to Bluenote every Sunday gave you butterflies. Guvnor, who was from the south and who I knew from doing security at other clubs, would greet you at the door. I had been given an actual Metalheadz membership card which guaranteed you entry on the night.

I have to say that Jo and Sahra, who worked on the door, ran the night superbly. In the background you had Christian, who was the label manager at the time, and Meredith who did press. Together it

was a tightly run ship.

When you reached the club entrance and walked downstairs the bass would rattle the whole building and the intense heat would hit you in the face straight away. The ceilings were very low, which helped with the acoustics. Troy and Bevan from Eskimo Noise², who were the main sound system during that time, ran the sound.

The main room couldn't have officially held more than 300 people, but most nights, it was rammed to the hilt with a queue still going around the block outside. You had to find your corner in the dance and cotch, as usually it was too packed to move about too much.

We always held court just as you would come downstairs and pass the pinball machines. You had to pass us, and we would stop any nice girls. If they had a stink attitude, we would literally lock them in the toilets until they banged on the door to be let out. It was banter and word quickly spread to watch the boys standing in the corridor. "They are trouble." Having our viewpoint every week, we could see every girl that walked in the club first. We were rowdy, but not in a bad way. I think that was what attracted the girls, as we just didn't give a damn.

One of the craziest stories I remember from that era is that I met this girl in the club, some Cockney slosher, and within ten minutes of speaking to her she was in my car on the way to the studio. We were having sex on my desk in my office and she blurts out, "Please take off the condom I want to have your baby!" In my head I was

²[RBMA Interview](#) and [Facebook](#) and [Knowledge Magazine](#)

like, “What the fuck? You’ve known me for all of an hour!” I faked an orgasm, quickly gathered my clothes and drove her back to the club.

There are a few deejays and a certain emcee who used to ravage Bluenote and get most of the girls first. I cannot and will not say their names here, as most are in relationships now. But these dudes know who they are.

It was that very spot outside pinball machines where I met Sophie, who was friends with my mate Jade. When we were first introduced, I was initially attracted to the fact she was posh and from the upper side of the tracks. I had never mixed with a lot of people from a privileged background, so dating her was an entirely new experience.

As usual, I had roving eyes. We lasted around eighteen months before it ended. I remember later flying out to New York with my girlfriend at the time and running into Sophie again, who was working in NY as a schoolteacher. I still see her from time to time and we get on really well. I know she has got my back.

I pride myself on the fact that I am still friends with most of my ex-girlfriends. I always felt that just because we did not work as a couple, does not mean something wasn’t there that brought us together. There are only two of my exes that I don’t speak to anymore: one is Amy, who was involved in mine and Bailey’s madness and the other is one I threatened to stab in her back.

I cannot adequately express how much I regret those words. I was young and my temper was wild. Not that this excuses anything.

Things escalated to such a toxic level place us, it ended with me saying some things I really wish I had not said. I spent years trying to get ahold of her to apologize, but unsurprisingly she would not take my calls.

Back to Bluenote. Another great feature of the night was, that it served West Indian food, so you could have a curry chicken or fish with rice and peas in the restaurant area whilst listening to beats.

The club was instrumental in shaping the scene at the time, and a lot of anthems were made during that era. Dillinja did a remix during that time of a tune called, [Ashes to Ashes](#) by the Australian band, [Faith No More](#). I used to go each Sunday just to hear Grooverider draw the plate.

A lot of the deejays had certain producers or labels who would regularly arm them up with tunes. Reinforced used Randall a lot as he was a resident and had history with the label. Plus, he was looked upon as the deejays' favourite deejay. Groove and Doc Scott were my two favourite deejays from the club's rotation and between them, they would play the last set. [Cleveland Watkiss](#) was the resident emcee and his voice and style of emceeing really complimented the music being played there.

Every week, without fail, [Peshay](#) would call me and say, "What's the name of that thing Groove was drawing?" Dude was on his hustle and was always looking for new dubs. Groove made me laugh one week. He came in a bit late and just stood in the crowd. I went up to him and was like, "Aren't you supposed to be on now?" And he was

like, “Yeah, but I want to see how deep Peshay’s box is. Has he got tunes to draw for more than an hour?” The gamesmanship between the deejays made me laugh sometimes.

Most of the scene’s deejays, producers and label bosses would come down each week. For one thing, we came to socialize, as it was an early evening Sunday vibe, and secondly, to gauge reaction to the new tunes. It was the go-to spot and many a deejay would walk out with big manila record sleeve, stuffed with the latest test presses and promos each week.

During these times, Hardware was slowly making a reputation for itself and Justin’s, aka Genotype, name was starting to get big with us. His tune [Extra Terrestrial](#) was on dubplate at the time and doing the rounds. He approached me one day whilst we were in Bluenote and said that Goldie wanted the tune for Metalheadz. Obviously, the label was very big — especially whilst the club was open. I said to him, “How is Hardware ever going to get big if we give away our biggest tunes?” I assured him, that in time, if we stayed together as a unit, we could one day be as big as Metalheadz and all of those other labels were. But we could not just give away our tunes. It was obviously flattering for bigger labels to want your music, but I was driven and actually wanted to out-do them, as to get our label up there with the best.

I remember meeting Optical for the first time, his name was gathering momentum as the new shit-hot engineer, and when I heard [Shape The Future](#), it all made sense. Pretty soon after that, he linked

up with Ed Rush to form the legendary label Virus.

Got to hand it to Goldie: Bluenote was a seminal club and I often wonder what the scene would be like if this forward-thinking night hadn't existed. It was the gateway for a lot of new and game-changing music.

Wax Club

Pages 300–302

Once upon a time, in 1994, a small darkly lit club was home of hardcore jungle rave organisation, [Telepathy](#). This regular Friday night jungle residency was not for the weak of heart. If you were brave enough to venture into Wax on your own, you'd better have people inside waiting for you. It wasn't only dark in attitude, but as well as in the lighting of the club. Additionally, it was a mixture of road mans just getting into the jungle sound and well-seasoned, ex-hardcore ravers who had been attending Telepathy at Marshgate Lane the year previously.

Wax was situated in an old East End pub in the back of Stratford, known as the White Heart. To the locals, it was known as Flappers and sat on a slip road going around the back of Temple Mills, where the mighty Olympic Park now stands. The club was not fancy at all. It was an old Victorian pub that had been painted black inside and housed a big rectangular saloon room that was opened up with an

old school pub bar and smaller DJ booth. Outside was a big old car park that was filled with XR2s, XR3Is, Escorts, Fiat Tipos etc.

Wax had a decent soundsystem and was only 6 pounds before 11 p.m. and a tenner thereafter. It had tight but polite security and a real deal junglist deejay and emcee lineup every week, with resident deejays SL, Andy C, [Devious D](#), and [Funky Flirt](#). The resident emcees that really cut their style at Telepathy were [Det](#), Shabba and Stevie Hyper D. Every week there would be three new guests in rotation with the residents, names like Fabio, Grooverider, Mickey Finn, Randall, Rap, Kenny Ken, Ron, Brockie, Ray Keith and many others deejays from Rush and Kool FM all had the junglist crew broking out from 10 p.m. till 6 a.m.

Wax was always packed as it was one of the local East End spots to go to every Friday night. It became like going down the pub. The dark room was hot, damp and loud. It had the unique fragrance of hardcore ash, slate, puff and bush tucker weed, combined with a new smell of burning plastic. Unknown to us, it was the latest drug of choice to hit the UK streets, crack cocaine, which peppered that venue. Anyone who denies it is straight up lying.

There is no doubt that what this small club in Stratford did for jungle is the stuff legends were made of. It is synonymous with the Bluenote in Hoxton and what it did for Metalheadz, and DnB in general. This was one of jungle's first real testing grounds. With so many big dubplates being cut at Music House each Friday night, every deejay really wanted to drop something bigger and badder

than the last DJ (I wish these days would come back).

RIP Wax club. Gone too soon, but the memory of creating plenty of jungle vibes lives on.

Testimonial — DJ Kid

(Scotland's Jungle and Drum & Bass Pioneer)

Pages 302–303

In 1993 I worked at Area 1 Records, which was one of only two underground stores in Edinburgh. I was in charge of ordering all the Breakbeat and Hardcore from Vinyl Distribution and SRD. I still remember vividly when [Here Comes Trouble](#) EP Volume One arrived at the shop, with the blue sleeve and trademark red logo. On listening to the EP I thought, “This is really different to everything else we have been getting in, and I need to speak whoever they are.” So, being as proactive as I was back then, I just called the number on the label and this was to be the first time I would speak to Clayton.

I would go on to promote everything that came out on Trouble On Vinyl and Renegade Hardware north of the border at my twelve-year residency Manga and my Jungle Manga events. This was when Clayton came to Edinburgh. It was his first experience of a proper chippy. No place in the world does chip shops like Scotland! I also had the pleasure of visiting the studio in Vauxhall one time when I

was playing at Movement at Bar Rumba. I made sure that I left with nuff Renegade Hardware merchandise that day.

Chapter 25

Depression

Pages 304–321

If I think back, I believe my depression started just after the millennium. At work we had a few successful years and we had come a long way from selling our first records out the back of Mark's car. I was working, flat out, day and night.

Some of you might say going to clubs every night and chit-chatting with deejays and producers or sitting in the office sorting out label release schedules and putting lineups together for events, is not work. I can assure you though, it is not as glamorous as you might think. This industry moves fast, and the behind the scene work can be quite stressful.

Around this time, I started smoking weed to take the edge off the hectic days and as I suffered from insomnia, I also used it to help me sleep. Right around then, I split up with my girlfriend after being

together for a few years. I attribute my some of my mental anguish to these things.

A few things had happened to me in my childhood, which I never really dealt with at the time. The sense of abandonment still stuck with me during my adult years and all the relationships I had with females, suffered from that, too. When they got close to me, I would back off out of fear that eventually I would get rejected again. This was rooted in my mum sending me back to England to live with my father who, in my eyes, was a total stranger to me. My fears and estrangement were solidified by my father kicking me out after I had spent less than six months with him.

In early 2002 I finally admitted to myself, that I needed professional help. I went to my doctor who, luckily, was only five minutes from our studio. He was from the States and I had about ten weekly sessions with him where he got me to talk about my childhood and my relationship with my mother. I was offered anti-depressant tablets and considered taking them. At this point I was ready to try anything. But Yoko and my sister, who worked in a hospital, persuaded me against it. I always thought my problems could be solved by other means.

Over the years, I saw friends take tablets. Most ended up drugged up to the eyeballs and walking around like zombies. You end up mentally and physically dependent on them. There is no shame in taking medication when you truly need it. Some conditions are better off with medication. You should never deny yourself the help you

need if that's what's best for you. But I feel, at least in this country, doctors are quick as lightning to hand out scripts for antidepressants the moment you tell them you're depressed. Instead of looking in deeper to see how they can help remove the aggravating factors of the illness, it seems like they choose the quick-fix, short-term method: drug them up, get them hooked and make more money for the pharmaceutical companies.

Mental health issues in the black community come with a big stigma. Combine that with being a male and the situation is intensified. For our parents' generation, there was no such thing as depression or anxiety. You were told to suck it up and just deal with it. For years I never really spoke to anyone, apart from my doctor, about it, as I thought, no one else suffered from what I was going through. I assumed, I could deal with it and that it was just a phase.

A few years later I started dating this Italian chick called Valentina. It turned out that her mother, Lisa, was a psychologist. I had a consultation with her mum, but she said it is unethical and against the rules for her to have counselling sessions with me whilst I was dating her daughter. I found that to be strange, but later I found out it was indeed part of the guidelines.

A few months later Valentina and I broke up... one of the many times in what was a fiery relationship. The combination of her Italian blood and my Jamaican roots was a cocktail for disaster. I called her mum and explained she could start seeing me in a professional capacity once a week for counselling sessions. It somewhat helped,

but it was a bit awkward, as her daughter was the topic of conversation a few times. That is when it dawned on me why the rule was in place.

During one of the sessions I had, Lisa said something which stuck with me. The doctor, who I was with a few years before, had told me I had clinical depression. She said people with clinical depression stay in bed all day and have trouble motivating themselves to do things. I was almost at that stage, but not that bad. I was still going into the office every day, so I assumed I was OK. After a few months, Valentina and I got back together again, so the sessions with her mum had to stop.

It is hard to explain to someone who has not been through depression, as most people do not get it. Many believe the false notion that to be depressed, you must have suicidal thoughts, or you have to cry and be moody all the time. It is often much more difficult to notice in people than that.

It almost helps to think of it as a spectrum or a sliding scale, where you can move about the varying levels of functionality within the illness. With the few people, who I did confide in about my depression, I was met with the usual question, “What have you got to be depressed about?” If only it were that simple. Depression does not discriminate. It will latch onto any race, creed, man, woman or child. It does not matter if you are rich, poor or if your life seems perfect.

Depression is an illness. An irrational, inescapable crushing sad-

ness and hopelessness that consumes every part of your senses. Even if you are on a more aware side of the spectrum or even if you see sense that there is much in your life to be happy about, you cannot control or avoid the darkness that creeps inside you like dread, weighing down and numbing your ability to feel free and joyful.

People mean well, when they try to say what they think will help. But it never does. Depression is not a choice. Its cause can be subconscious and complex for one and rooted in one pivotal life event for another or any scenario in between.

While the stereotypical view of depression is the tortured soul, refusing to shower and eat, crying themselves to sleep and refusing to leave their bed. That is not often the case. Depression is often hidden in plain sight, covered by smiles, laughter and good times with friends.

This was where I was at. In my head I was fighting a battle, on the outside I seemed fine. I put on an act and tried to be jovial. It is only when I would get home from a day at the studio, that I would lose myself in smoking weed. Nobody ever realizes, how exhausting it is to hold yourself up and pretend you are OK. Everything feels heavy... literally physically heavy. As if you're out wearing a suit made of lead. The exhaustion from having to interact and appear happy would take its toll when I was finally in my personal space again.

Aside from weed, I tried to start a relationship with alcohol, but it didn't last. I was never a hard drinker. If I had to describe my

drinking pattern, it was more social. If I went out, which of course was often, I would be offered drinks all night.

I tried other, more healthy coping mechanisms: yoga, jogging, and other physical activities. None of them worked. Then a few years later, I finally split up with my girl. It hit me hard, even though when I met Valentina, I knew we weren't going to last.

Valentina and I had been put together by a mutual mate, who thought we would be compatible. She set up a blind date and when we met at a restaurant in Chalk Farm. I was hooked by Valentina's looks. I know, it is shallow. But obviously, that's the first thing you go for. After a meal and a few drinks, we moved on to The End club. It was not my night on, but I could always turn up and get in. I remember asking her, how many kids she wanted. Quick as a flash, I was told five. I then knew, there was no long-term future with her and me. I had a son, which was not planned, and I definitely did not want any more. I think my childhood influenced me not wanting to have kids. I have three sisters and none of them have kids. And I do not think that is a coincidence.

So back to the breakup of Valentina and me. We were supposed to go to Cuba on holiday. You know, those holidays where you're going to give it one last chance? The problem was, I had just bought Breakin Science and had an event coming up. When we booked the holiday, I didn't know the purchase of Breakin Science was on the cards. I explained that work had to come first and promised her I would book another holiday to make up for it.

A few months later, I booked another holiday. This time to Thailand. I had been there before, and it was a beautiful country. Lo and behold, a few weeks before we were scheduled to go, I got cold feet. We were constantly arguing, obviously Valentina was pissed. She booked a holiday by herself to go to the Dominican Republic. When she came back, she looked good. Tanned and fit. The craven man in me wanted to rekindle our relationship, but I knew in the long run we would argue again.

A few days later we went out for a meal with Ink and his missus and got into the mother of all arguments in Soho. It was a madness and almost got physical. When it gets poisonous like that then it is time to walk away.

So, even though I knew the relationship would not last, when it finally did end, I took it badly, as it had been Valentina's decision, not mine. It took at least a year for me to get over it. Valentina and I are really good friends now. She has three kids and we talk on a regular basis.

When we had to close the label and the office — due to us haemorrhaging money from putting on too many events — that added to my stress. I kept the office open for a year more than I should have. But I felt a great sense of responsibility to the staff. Kenton, who was our bookkeeper for the last five years, just had a new baby and there were a few others in the office who I knew would be financially fucked if they lost their job. The funny thing is, when we had bailiffs round and I literally had to close the doors, everyone found a job

within a few weeks.

It gives me jokes when people have had me down as a heartless bastard. For the last year in the studio, I did not take a penny, as all the money that came in went to make sure the staff got paid. This was a very stressful time and I felt myself sinking deeper into my depression.

Some people say that is the price you pay when you run your own company. But most people would have folded the company and not given two fucks about what happened. I did not know what else to do but carry on as I always had done. I kept pushing forward and pretended I was fine.

Just before we closed the studio, an incident happened which made the decision to shut down easier. I got attacked by six hoodrats and got my watch, chain and rings taken.

Let me give you the back story: Our studio was situated in the dodgy part of South London. In Vauxhall. Go down there now and it's all new high-rise apartments and big plush superstores. But when we were there, it was a shit-hole. Behind the studio the area was called Beirut and the opposite from the studio the area was called Baghdad. The postcode beefs and the gang culture were rife then. All the youts had different coloured bandanas, repping different gangs. On either side of the road you had loads of low-income apartments and it was a breeding ground for degenerates and fuckups.

I knew most of the hoodrats by face, as the studio was well known, and I would see them walk past. I lived a ten-minute walk from the

studio, so I was in the manor all the time. Tanna, the dude who actually started the [Bloods](#) in this country, was running with [PDC](#) at the time (who were a notorious gang from Brixton). He lived just behind the studio and used it a few times.

I saw loads of shit happen around the area, but never really concerned myself with it. I remember what I was like at that age. Most of the youts were brainless and just wanted to make easy money.

Anyway, my mum's friend was over from the states for two weeks and he was staying with me. The day before he was due to go back, he said he wanted to see a bit of London. So I decided to take him up West End.

It was a Saturday and I was going to the Mass club later on as Dillinja had one of his Valve nights on. As we were coming out the block where my apartment was, I had my chain, watch, and ring on me.

I had purchased the chain a few months earlier from a friend. Just a few weeks before, I had gone to a club in Kings Cross with my good friend Helen and some dudes who were part of [North Star](#) (which was a crew from Tottenham) tried to move to me and take the chain. A dude kept coming up to me trying to size me up and see who I was with in the club. I saw him walk back to his crew and knew straight away they thought I was a soft target.

I am from the roads and my sixth sense kicked in. I knew what they were planning to do just from dude's behaviour. So, I started talking to a few security guards and went and stood on stage like I

knew people at the event. I knew hardly anyone but had enough sense to act like I did anyway. Eventually, I think they got thrown out or left. I should have known then, not to wear the fucking chain out as it drew too much attention. But the ignorant side of me was like, "Fuck it, I worked hard for it, and no one is going to come up to me and jack it."

Anyway, as I am leaving the block, there is a group of six guys sitting down with a big fuck off Pitbull and a few mountain bikes. I walk past them not thinking much. I see them look at me, but I still do not clock anything, as I knew their faces. We walk down the end of my road and instinct told me to turn around. I saw them coming to where I was and instantly knew something was up. I said to my mum's friend, "Stand at the bus stop and don't move."

I knew these guys were going to try to rob me and I did not want him involved. Dude was an old boy and definitely wasn't built for anything remotely like that. I thought the best thing to do was to walk away from him so they could not do anything to him.

One of the guys came up on a bike and had his hand in his pocket like he had a gun. Then I saw another two coming up behind him and another three on the other side of the road. I thought if I ran into the middle of the road maybe a car would stop. So I went on the road but cars just swerved me. I can laugh at it now, but at the time it was no joke. I ran away from the dude on the bike but ran straight into the other guys.

They got me under the bridge, kicked and punched me till I was

balled up like a foetus, then they ripped the chain, watch, and ring from me. What made it worse was that, after they got my shit, one of the dudes took out a baseball bat and cracked me over the head.

I have to be thankful that I am still here to tell the story, as a few weeks before a rapper called Big (who used to use my studio) told me his cousin had the same thing happen to him. Some boys rushed him in Tottenham, took his jewellery, cracked him over the head with a bat and the guy died.

The only thing that was hurt was my pride. Someone called the police and they showed up within minutes. I told them, I did not know shit and that I had never seen the guys before. Rule number one is no snitching. I thought I would handle this myself, because I knew most of them lived near the studio.

The next day my mum called me and was like, “Why didn’t you just give them the jewellery?” It was hard to explain. Adrenaline was flowing and I thought, “Why am I going to give these little shits my goods?”

A few days later I saw one of them on his own. I knew both, his brothers as one used to play on Kool FM and the other was a local junkie. I said to him, “You know it’s going to be on with you and your boys who attacked me.” He was like, “Do what you want, I don’t have nothing to live for.” Him saying that, really made me think that these kids were literally fearless. I wanted to boar them up one by one, but they knew where my studio was.

I could handle myself, but I had to think of the safety of Yoko,

Kenton and the other staff. The last thing I wanted, was youts running up in the studio doing harm to them. During the next week or so, I made some phone calls to try and find out about these youts. It turns out that they used to go around pubs in the local area and rob yardies and drug dealers. So they were well known.

I saw the tallest one a few times after the incident. Guy was such a pussy; he would not even look in my direction when he was on his own. That is the thing with these guys: together they're like rats but alone they're straight up pussy.

Karma played its part, as four out the six got convicted for various murders a few months after. One of them used a pitbull to attack and rob someone in the park literally opposite where I lived. It was the first conviction of someone using a dog to kill someone. Another shot a Somalian guy in Stockwell, in a high rise. The tall one stabbed someone in Burgess Park, in Camberwell. I was glad to hear that they got put behind bars. I knew that if I got revenge, it would just end up being a tit for tat. I could not take the chance of anyone who worked in the office getting hurt, so that helped the decision of shutting the studio.

That episode left me with anxiety and for a while if anyone walked behind me, I became uneasy. My ever-growing depression deepened.

Over the next few years, things got bad. I am not really sure what the final straw was for me, but I was sinking so deep into my depression, I couldn't see any way out. It is hard to say what moves a person to seek help. It might be different for everyone, but I had

finally reached that point. You get to these crossroads where you either need to reach for help or jump into the abyss. I was reaching for help.

I decided to tackle my problem head-on. I called my doctor and said I needed help, as I was feeling suicidal. To be honest, he was brilliant and straight away set up an appointment with a counsellor. I remember the first meeting with her, I broke down in tears. When you get to a certain point, tears become an involuntary action.

Depression festers, it builds up despair like pressure over time. The feeling becomes so thick and compressed in your core, that once you begin to finally vent it out, it takes the course of a storm — unpredictable.

I saw this lady every Tuesday for four months. Eventually, we both agreed I was on the mend. I cannot say enough how much it helps to talk to someone. During those sessions, I opened up about my relationship with my parents and she said something which was simple, but which I had never considered. She said, “We put our parents on a pedestal as kids, and think they are perfect. Of course, now we know that’s not the truth.” She always told me, that we can’t choose our parents.

I enjoyed going to these sessions, as it was one day in the week where I could speak to someone who was not judgmental. I could spill my guts. After about sixteen weeks she said, I had come a long way since the complete mess I’d been in the first session. I was good... or so I thought.

A few months later, I fell back into the old habits of smoking weed and being a recluse. I started to watch porn regularly. It was an escape. Pretty soon I shut off most of my mates. My anxiety meant, that I fell into a cycle of making plans to meet friends or go out, then feeling, a few hours before, that I wouldn't be able to leave the house. This went on for years.

The feeling is crippling. It is a battle between being frozen by an irrational resistance or fear and knowing in your head, there is nothing to be feeling that way about. You are at war between your ability to reason and your body responding to very real physiological symptoms. In the end, it is usually easier to just avoid the situation, despite initially wanting to go. I suppose, at least I know I have a problem... unlike some people who walk around clueless.

I think what also helped me was when my doctor made me an appointment at Maudsley Hospital in Camberwell. The hospital was legendary when I was a youth. Everyone knew that's where the so-called mad people went, and we used to make jokes about it with each other. Little did I know that years later, I would find myself in there.

I walked in and saw people looking zombified. Within minutes I saw a black guy going up to the prescription counter and shouting that if he didn't get his meds, he was going to smash the place up. It really shook me. I was glad I went though, as it confirmed to me, I needed to get help so that I would not end up like those dudes.

My depression comes and goes. I have some days where I feel

OK, but most often it is the opposite. It is always there, even when I am happy. The weight of it lingers. Someone said something a few years ago which has stuck in my mind. I was told, depression never leaves you and that scares me. Hopefully, I can keep it under control without having to resort to meds.

Cligga's Angels

Pages 319–321

You have heard of Charlie's Angels, but I want to mention "Cligga's Angels." Three amazing women who are very dear to my heart. These lot have been at my side through all the bad times and I want to give them a special salute.

I am blessed to have these girls around me. They are always there for me no matter what. They say it is only when you're really in a bad way, you can see who is really there for you... who your real friends are. These three are the best any friends could ever be.

I met Jade around 1996 when Metalheadz at Bluenote started in Hoxton.¹ She was a regular and after seeing her every week we eventually struck up a friendship which has lasted to present day. Over the years, I have linked quite a few of her mates, but after

¹https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2234170296904543&id=100009347821762, "Met this girl in 1997 in bluenote through a mutual friend and since then we have had a wonderful friendship ,look at her almost as a little sister and would do anything for her apart from supporting her football team..lol,on a serious note have a wonderful birthday Jade Fialho ,shame i cant enjoy with you,but when you get back we have to go for some food and drinks,love you loads xx cligga", 4.02.2019.

continuously hearing from them about me not being “Mr Right”, she cut off my oxygen supply. I am forbidden to say to her anymore the famous line, “Who is your mate?” Jade is like my little sister. She always comes to me for a male perspective and I regularly go to her for advice as well.

I met Helen in 1999 when I used to go Swerve at the Milk Bar. I saw her a few times around before and marveled how beautiful she was, but as I am shy, I did not talk to her for a while until I knew we had mutual mates. We fell out of touch until 2003 and when we reconnected, she became resident at our bi-monthly End club sessions, playing hip-hop in Room 2. We became really good mates over the years and now I consider her one of my loyal friends. If only all my mates had such a big heart as hers. Most of the times I go out, she is my raving partner. We had many good times together.

I met Nadia in 2007 or 2008 via Chris Renegade who at the time was our label manager. They say first impressions normally last; I remember going across the road to the pub to have a meeting with her. I asked what she wanted to drink, and she said “A pint”, which made me laugh. When I found out she was an avid football fan, I knew we were going to get on.

I was interviewing her to be a presenter for the DVD magazine I just started, Code of the Streets. Since then, she has left her pint-drinking days behind and upgraded to champagne. I’m surprised we are as good of friends as we are, considering our deep-seated hatred for each other’s football teams. I’m an avid Cockney Red and

she is Bindipper aka avid Liverpool supporter. We are continuously ribbing each other, even to the point we stopped talking for eighteen months due to the football banter reaching fever pitch. Despite that, we have a very good friendship and she has been there through all the highs and lows of what I have been through.

To say, I am grateful for these three in my life would be an understatement. Words cannot express how much their friendship means to me and I would be lost without them. You would think having three close female mates would help me to understand the female mind better, but it does not. I see in all three of them combined, attributes I'd look for in a wife.

Testimonial — DJ Silver / Northbase

Page 321

First time I met Clayton was at his office in Vauxhall, but we had chatted on the phone before. We had signed an EP on his label called [Generation Dub](#) and some other music forthcoming on various albums in the pipeline — did you know G Dub named themselves after our EP?

The one thing I remember when I first met Clayton at his office was, he said to me, “You smoke weed?” I was like, “Hell yeah, let’s wrap one up.” Next minute man pulls out this massive bin (you know a bin that you would use at home for rubbish) full to the brim of dank. We smoked a few, chatted about music and the rest is history. I then

went around the office collecting vinyl tracks from the label library, which was amazing, and loads of other merchandise. I was like a kid in a sweet shop. Have to say Clayton is a stand-up guy. Not many people get him, but I do. He has been good to me and has been an integral part of my career within the drum and bass scene. Sending love to my bruv.

Chapter 26

Kane

Pages 322–327

Kane and I have had a very turbulent relationship over the years. I first met him when he was DJing at Electribe, which was situated in the infamous [Brain club](#) on Wardour Street. It was run by Otis, who was one of the first rave promoters I got to know first-hand.

The year was 1992. Mark and I happened to hear rave music bellowing out, so we walked in all curious. We saw Kane behind the decks. He was young and eager, so I was surprised that someone this young, had such extensive musical knowledge. I explained that we were setting up a record label and asked if he was interested in being part of it. We exchanged numbers and a short time later he came down to our makeshift studio in Streatham.

He featured on our first EP, [Here Comes Trouble Volume 1](#), with a tune called [Isaac's Story](#). Even from the early days, he was instrumental in the A&R process. As he was a budding deejay and spent

his time going to clubs trying to get a squad of artists together. Pretty soon, we moved to an office and studio on Wandsworth Road and set about establishing our empire.

I must give him props for helping come up with the name, Renegade Hardware. We were brainstorming one day at the studio and I suggested the name “Renegade” for our label, as that summed up Mark and me. We were rebellious and did not want to conform. Our ethos even way back then was, that it was us against the world.

I remember Kane taking me to see Ray Keith, who worked at Blackmarket, to discuss if he was OK with us using the name. At the time Ray was using the name [Renegade](#) as a production alias. He was cool with it, but to be honest, I was going to use the name anyway, especially after we added Hardware to the end. No one owned the name, but out of respect Kane was like, “Let’s run it past Ray.” Kane was pivotal in pushing our sound and when we started Renegade Records, he was the first artist on the label.

Renegade Records was started before Hardware as an outlet to put out more experimental beats. As Kane was literally the first artist in the camp, we built up a bond and he played an integral part in getting all three of our labels off the ground.

Looking back, I think one of the mistakes I made was being friends with the artists on the label. In a way, it could not be helped, as we were literally in the office or studio every day, working side by side. Maybe it had some good points, but ultimately it blurred the lines. I think that, when all the other artists arrived, they looked at Kane as

if he were the teacher's pet.

He pretty much ended up being the go-between in talks between us, the management and the other artists. I can look back and laugh now at the early struggles of most of the artists. Sleeping underneath the mixing desk or in the vocal booth, going to EL Haks (the local kebab shop) and sharing a portion of chips and hot wings when none of us had any money.

For the next year or so, we were at full pelt with the releases. I thought of myself as an underdog and I definitely had a chip on my shoulder. The mindset was, that no-one is going to give you anything, especially in this game. Whatever you want, you must go out and take it. We added DJ Red, Shogun and a few others to the camp.

Renegade Hardware launched. We had Darren D Bridge and Jason Maldini, who were at the forefront of the Techstep sound and we were putting together our [first label compilation](#). As with any walk of life, egos started to kick in and some of the artists started to believe their own hype. Also, other artists, who they would meet up with at Music House, would be asking them, "Why don't you set up your own label", or "why don't you join somewhere bigger?"

When Black Thursday happened, my relationship with Kane was very strained. We blamed him for being the ringleader of the mutiny. We did not talk for several years and when we saw each other out it was always Frosty.

A few incidents made the tension worse. Somehow Kane got himself banned from The End club. What he did to get banned I am

not sure. I think Victor, who was head of security, thought all black guys (especially with dreads) looked alike and mixed him up with a dealer. I heard soon after, from various people, that I was being accused of getting him banned.

During this time, his apartment got broken into and his records and various other things got stolen. Yet again he pointed the finger at me. Drumming someone's house is not my style, especially as my house had got broken into a few years previously and my whole record collection had been stolen. So I knew the feeling.

While this tension was in the air, I did an event at Colosseum, in Vauxhall. We got Dekafex to host the second room. Dekafex was a big hip-hop brand at the time and the fusion with DnB in the other room worked. The two owners were Dave and [Duncan](#) aka [DJ Skeletrik](#), , who also managed the excellent beatboxer [Killa Kella](#). Dave was very eccentric, but he and his partner worked well together. I despised Kane at the time and didn't really want to put any money in his pocket, but he came with Dekafex so I had to swallow my pride and book him.

A little while later things really came to a head. I think he was trying to sue us for royalties owed, but my mindset was "Fuck you, you left us for dead," so sorting out royalties for him was the last thing on my mind. He got his father involved, as his dad was a big figure in the music industry. The ironic thing was, Mark and I took a course before we launched the label and his pops, [Root Jackson](#), was the speaker. It was all about making sure you have everything

set up properly, for example publishing, contracts, etc. Not sure how we got to talking on the phone during that period, but we had a few heated conversations.

During one conversation I was in the car with Ink. We happened to be in Camden and Kane called me. I was like, “You know what, fuck the back and forth, let’s meet up and settle our differences once and for all.” I was headed to his house and I hate to think what would have happened if I had gotten there. Ink again talked sense and I did not go in the end. Kane and I are both bone-headed and I honestly think one of us would have ended up in hospital and one in court. The hatred was real and deep.

A few years later I purchased Breakin Science, and I needed someone to do the legwork and be the face of the brand. I was not exactly in love with the sound and dealing with artists was a headache for me. So, Kane came to mind as I knew he was in still love with DnB and had a relationship with most of the dudes that were on the circuit.

Time is a great healer, and soon after he came on board and was running Breakin Science with me. During those years, we worked closely and somewhat got on, even if it was just dealing with the events on a professional basis. I have a memory like an elephant and part of me still did not totally forgive him for what happened on Black Thursday. A lot of people in the scene were surprised we reunited, as most everyone knew how deep the beef was. But as I got older, I was willing to put aside shit for business purposes.

During the Breakin Science era, things were cool until I sold it and

then we ended up back at loggerheads. He and I have a cat and dog relationship and I do not see that changing anytime soon. I recently sold him the [Trouble on Vinyl](#) back catalogue and at the present time we are not looking to kill each other.

Chapter 27

Sex & Drugs & DnB

Pages 328–346

Of course, sex and drugs played a big part in the scene, mostly because all the artists thought they were [Bon Jovi](#) at one time or another. As a promoter, label boss and a face in the scene, I saw my fair share of groupies, too.

[Miami Music Conference](#) was one of the best places to get together for a week of debauchery. It was held at the Fountain Bleu Hotel on the same week as the American college spring break in March. The combination of electronic music lovers and college students, who would flock to Miami for the hip-hop events, was a marriage made in heaven. For the first few years all the big electronic labels in the house, techno and DnB scene would gather and put on showcases.

The DnB parties would go down in history; Moving Shadow did one, Virus and RAM would later link up.¹ That would be the talk

¹I'm not sure what he is talking about, but the 2001 UMC had artists from RAM,

of the town, and me being me with my competitive nature, I didn't want to miss out. A year later I managed to get a two-room event in Miami.² For the life of me I cannot remember who I hooked up with. It was either DJ SS and the Formation lot³ or it was Sarah and Fabio via Groove Connection. The networking for that one week was important. All this was well before the social media era. It was the one event on the calendar that everyone from all corners of the world tried to attend. The weather and the array of deejays made it special.

The first year I went I met some chick who worked in the industry. For obvious reasons, I cannot and will not say her name and put her on blast (excuse the pun). I knew of her and she certainly knew of me. I struck up a conversation and we shared some MDMA. After seeing her in pum-pum shorts and what the sun did to her skin and hair, one thing led to another. After a few drinks, I was in the corner finger-blasting her. I never did get her to bed, as shortly after that, she got hooked up with a producer. I believe they went on to marry.

American and Canadian chicks were easy pickings. Both were not reserved and loved to party. The English accent and the fact we music industry people were almost mythical figures (this was before social media made everyone accessible) certainly gave us mystique.

Virus and more on the [lineup](#). Everything was hosted by D&B Arena. The Viram linkup happened in 2003 at the [Cristal Night Club](#) (22.03.2003). But they played the year before in 2002 and 2001. Moving Shadow had a linkup via AK1200, but I can not confirm an official MS event in 2000 (which Clayton alludes to.)

²This is 26.03.2002. [Bassdrive Radio Timetable](#), "Renegade Hardware Presents: The Harder They Come - Launch Tour", [American DnB feature](#)

³The World of DnB parties started in 2000 IIRC.

I was known, but not as known as some of the mandem. They had pussy on tap.

Certain chicks would go through loads of deejays and feel no way. I remember confronting this one well-known London groupie hoe. I asked her why she did what she did and slept with so many dudes. She replied, "I'm providing a service." I was gobsmacked and just shook my head and walked away. I know what you are going to say: men sleep with loads of girls and get called a champion gyalist, but a woman does it and she is called a sket.

Each year I would go, I would line up a chick beforehand and spit game. Facebook was not rife then, so I did my dirt secretly.

I do not do cocaine. I tried it once and the thought of anything going up my nose apart from a cotton bud, did not sit well with me. I had a relationship with a girl who was a cocaine fiend. Seeing her nose bleed and the way she changed when she was under the influence, struck a nerve with me. In Miami though, coke was the drug of choice and it wasn't like the bullshit London pub grub, that has been stepped on numerous times. Stepped on means, it has been cut to fuck with all sorts of shit. By all accounts, the Miami coke was peng.

One legendary story was about a certain deejay got so mangled he had to wear adult diapers to stop shitting himself. Apparently, he got so fucked on gear he could not control his bowels. That particular crew held the title as the biggest consumers of drugs almost every year. If they could swallow it, they took it. I never knew of

prescription drugs like Xanax and Oxycodone till those boys were doing it on a regular basis.

Most of the deejays brought wifey to the conference. All the girlfriends knew each other and if you paraded the side-chick that week, news would get back to her and all hell would break loose. The industry dudes were thirsty and would try and take your chick if they saw an opening. It was all ego and most of it was just to prove a point. It said to me that most of the dudes were very insecure.

I remember bringing my girl at the time out for the week. I had a thing for Asian chicks, and she was half-English and half-Chinese. I actually remember going to Metalheadz and for a few weeks just marvelling at how fit she was. I was transfixed by her calves. I do not like to get shot down like a Russian fighter jet over American airspace when approaching chicks, especially if there's a chance you'll see her again, so I just would watch her from afar and marvel. When Ink did a night in Soho called Capacity, I saw her there and finally approached her. I invited her down to Hardware a week later, and we ended up dating for a few years. I was in my prime and wasn't ready for a serious relationship, pussy was on tap out for the week.

I remember, it was the year those heels were in fashion where you tied the straps up to the knees, I called them gladiators. The heels came out first, then a few years later the sandals were also in fashion. I used to love those and begged her to wear them all the time. I have a slight fetish for heels, even though at the end of the night, all I would hear was complaining about her feet hurting. I'd

reply, "That's the price of looking good."

Anyway, the point I was making was dudes thought, as they were name brand, all they had to do is say hello and someone's chick would run off with them. Most of them dudes were not getting pussy under their government name before they started deejaying. Ultimately in that case, you meet gold diggers who will rinse you out.

I have heard countless stories about chicks from abroad who would sleep with a dude whilst he is on tour, move to the UK, and after a few months shit would end in failure. One particular producer was always a sucker for love. Dude had no game whatsoever, but he had money. You know what they say, "A fool and his money shall part." He met a stripper in the States, bought her breast implants, paid her college tuition and her rent, came over with her and paraded her around. He used to turn up at my nights with her, almost falling over, as she brought her stripper shoes with her. Only thing she forgot was the pole.

Little known to him, dude was a laughingstock in the scene, as everyone who knew him could see the chick was just out to rinse his money. Thing is, she wasn't even all that. Another lighty as we say (a mixed race chick who thought her shit didn't stink, who had a horrendous boob job and a flat ass similar to an ironing board). Remember, she was a stripper, so she already had a certain mindset. Usually, her job was to fleece money out of dudes for a three-minute dance. With this wasteman, it was a long-term rinse. Lo and behold, and not surprising to anyone, she dumped him after a year or so. I

heard dude got taken to the cleaners. After the breakup, dude was still paying her college fees and all sorts. Why didn't anyone warn him and get him to listen to that old Dr Dre tune? Dre famously said, "You can't turn a hoe into a housewife."⁴

Over the years, I have seen loads of innocent, fresh-faced chicks get sucked in the scene. It is easy to get carried away by the attention musicians give you, the bright lights and the drugs. Most dudes just look at them as fresh meat. And if you're not careful, before you know it you're labelled a champion sket.

Even though most people in the scene went to Miami predominantly for the DnB events, the highlight of the week for me was the hip-hop parties.

Talking about strip club and strippers. Toronto was a place, besides England, where DnB was the biggest. The events used to rival UK ones in size and vibes, I started to do some parties with Ryan Ruckus, who was one of the best underground promoters over there at the time. We bought over Dillinja, Brockie, Ray Keith, Nicky Blackmarket, Usual Suspects, amongst others.

All the times I used to go over, my favourite haunt to hang out at was Brass Rail. It was a strip club on Young Street, and I think it is still there. I would sit inside for hours and hours. Compared to the London strip clubs, Brass Rail was a class above. The layout was a bit better and more importantly, the quality of the girls was head and shoulders above the choices on the London circuit.

⁴Dr. Dre - 2001, Track 19, "Housewife"

At Brass Rail I met this Costa Rican dime piece whose stage name was Angel. The name did her justice. You know those girls that are so fit, you tell her drinking her bath water would be an honour. Not going to lie: I spent a few bucks having dances with her. The funny thing is, a few years later the boys and I went to a strip club in downtown Miami. It was the year we did the infamous Hardware party at The Laundry Bar (which in the daytime functioned as a laundry and at night turned into a crazy venue with a phat sound system).[From 2005 to 2007] Anyway, we were in the strip club and who do I see? Angel. She was strutting her stuff. Her English was limited, but I reminded her I saw her a few times in Toronto. We shared a laugh and I got a lap dance from her.

Toronto reminded me of London in a lot of ways. It was very multicultural. You found every ethnicity you could think of and I remember another incident which made me chuckle. At the time I was over for a long weekend doing another party and I thought, "Let me see what the escorts are like." So, it was advertised in the hotel lobby, were they had a magazine, I guess like craigslist, and in the back girls offered their services. I thought, instead of talking up a brass and being lied to about what she looks like and get duped, I would sit in the lobby and watch her come to the desk and ask for my room. Then if she was butters, I would stay put in the lobby. She would knock my room door and eventually fuck off.

Around this time, I met Jamila, who was a Moroccan chick. I used to go to a comedy club on Sundays on Bond Street, which was in

London's West End. We had a few mutual mates and after seeing her for a few weeks at the venue, we exchanged numbers. Soon after, we started a booty call which would last ten plus years.

What I liked about Jamila was, she did not know anyone in the DnB scene. She was a hoodrat chick, which I kinda liked. She grew up in a tough housing estate in East London and often done bun and cheese, which is slang for credit card and cheque fraud and all sorts of other illegal activities. She was on anything which made dough and I liked her hustle mentality. Jamila was one of those chicks where, if you're going to a hip-hop jam, she would fling on a wife beater, with her low fitting jeans and female boxers slightly showing, and some Timberlands for good measure. But it the next breath, if we went out to a fancy restaurant, she would rock a figure-hugging dress with some Manolo Blanick heels.

You are probably wondering how a booty call lasted ten years; we had chemistry and the sex was good. We both, at first, did not want any commitment. When we first hooked up, it was on the premise that it was just sex and it worked for both of us. During those times, if one of us got into a relationship, we would cease contact. For years it was the same routine. She would call me or vice versa and say, "Are you busy?" If we both were free, she would come to my yard, have sex, chit-chat for a bit, then she would leave. I liked the arrangement and we actually became good friends.

It is hard not to have some type of affection for someone you are sleeping with for that long a period of time. In all the years of linking,

I took her out. Once we went Jungle Fever at Heavens in Charing Cross, and a few times we went to some high-class restaurants up-town. She was my undercover lover, unbeknownst to me she started to catch feelings. She called me on her thirtieth birthday and said, "I am ready to settle down," and I was like, "that's good," not knowing she wanted her and me to try and make something more than just a booty call. She also added, I would have to turn Muslim. I was like, "First of all, I don't think you and I are compatible any more than what we got already, and if I was going to turn Muslim, I wouldn't do it just to please your mum."

We tried to have a normal, proper relationship, but that did not last long. We broke off contact for a few months, and then out the blue she called me over the festive season and asked to come round. When she came round, I said, "Have you ever taken MDMA before?" As soon as she said no, I gave her some.

An hour later she was like, "Let's call up an escort from the internet, I want to have sex with a chick." If you could have seen the quickness in me going on the net and calling an agency, you would have laughed. I thought my luck was in, I instantly thought three-some. If I am paying for it surely, I should be able to participate as well.

A short time later, there was a knock on my door and some Eastern European brass turned up. By this time, Jamila was buzzing hard on the MDMA and the brass started to have sex with her. I was told, unless I paid her more dough I could only watch. I thought, "Fuck

that, a hundred and fifty an hour is enough dough coming out my pocket.” I went upstairs frustrated and after an hour the chick left.

Jamila was a good girl. I kept saying to her, “You can speak four languages, put it to use and get a job paying you for your skills.” She was wasting her talents, and she never shrugged off the hoodrat or ratchet mentality.

Just before we lost contact with each other, we went to Ireland for a weekend. We were doing a night in Dublin, so I thought it would be good to bring her. I got the promoter to pay her flights and get a hotel for us. Soon as we got there, we went to a pub and some dude touched her ass. Instead of letting me handle the situation, she went up to dude and started punching him in the face. I thought it was going to be a case of me taking on the whole pub, but everyone saw the disrespect the drunk dude did to Jamila. The owner came up, apologized and kicked dude out.

Looking back, I was not a nice person to be in a relationship with. I had a roving eye and the analogy I kept telling myself was, “You can’t have Cornflakes every day... it gets boring.” I wanted my Coco Pops, Bran Flakes, Weetabix, Honey Puffs and Frosted Flakes. I think my fear of rejection, which came from my childhood, made it easy to fuck around. At one point I found myself linking five to six chicks at the same time. At first, I thought I was the man, but I eventually had to lie, turn my phone off and do a quick inspection of my house as not to leave traces of another chick. It was hard not to say some girl’s name instead of someone else’s. It was tiresome, and quickly

the fun stopped.

I often ask my mates who have been in long-term relationships: “What is the key?” I personally have the mindset that variety is the spice of life. The thought of being with someone for years used to puzzle me. There are too many nice girls walking around to be stuck with one all your life. I have had very good innings of going around the world, some by travelling and some by going on tour with some of the boys. I have seen what the world has to offer, and I’ve had my fun. As I have gotten older though, my mindset has changed and I feel ready to find a soulmate.

It is definitely taken me some years to get to that thought though. I remember one time I went to Canada for an event I was promoting and got back early Tuesday morning, I got one of the chicks I was seeing to pick me up from Heathrow as she lived close to the airport. My girl at the time, who I lived with, was at work, so I knew I had all day to do my dirt. I spent a few hours with, let’s call her Rebecca, and I got her to drop me home later. My girl comes home all excited to see me and then she plucks a blonde hair off my jacket and says, “What the fuck is this?” In my head I was like “WTF” and had to think quickly of an excuse. I was like, “My cousin in Toronto, his girl was helping me pack and her hair must have got on my jacket whilst helping me.” Luckily, she knew my cousin’s girl was indeed blonde and I said it with such conviction she believed me.

My girl was like a hawk. Not much got past her. I used to go to Amsterdam quite a lot around the millennium. I was there so often

I should have gotten honorary citizenship from the Dutch Prime Minister. The amount of money I put in the Dutch coffers was scary.

One night my mate Adi J was playing in Mazzo and I met some Indonesian chick called Kamala. Anyone who knows me, knows I have a penchant for Asian chicks. Instantly I was like, “Who the fuck is that” and found out, she was one of the warm-up deejays’ girlfriend. Throughout the night we struck up small talk and instantly I was attracted to her. I said to myself, “I am going to bag that.” I was in no rush, as I went out there on a regular basis.

Anyway, next month I was out there again, and we arranged to go for a drink. It was strictly platonic as she had a boyfriend and I was living with my chick at the time. Anyway, we went out for a drink, and, back when you were allowed to smoke weed, in the pubs and clubs. I got mad high on the local skunk and drank one too many Jack Daniels and lemonades. By the end of the night, we both knew there was an attraction. I felt kind of bad as I got to know her partner at the time, but she told me things were rocky between them anyway and she said she was with him more out of can’t-be-bothered-to-break-up, rather than love.

We started to talk via Myspace more often and then I decided to take my girl to Amsterdam for Valentine’s Day. We ended up going for a meal with Kamala and her boyfriend. Not sure what possessed me to do something like that, but I assumed nothing could or would go any further as we both had our partners. It was an awkward dinner, and as soon as I get back to the hotel my chick was like, “That

girl fancies you.” I quickly replied, “Don’t be stupid.” Girls have a sixth sense and for the whole night she was like a dog with a bone.

A month later I went back, as, by then, we were doing regular events and we met up again. This time it was clear something was going to happen. But I did not want to go behind anyone’s back, so I went back home and told my girl I had met someone else. Soon as I said that she instantly said, “Who? That Dutch bitch?” I felt bad, but my girl and I were going through our own shit and meeting Kamala just accelerated the break-up.

Looking back, I really regret what I did as I did not really know Kamala. I was thinking with my dick and not my head. We got together and I quickly found out, she had mental issues, smoked way too much weed and got super paranoid. It was like looking at myself in the mirror. A few months later, I was taking my son to Disney World and as my family lived in Florida, I could visit and thus kill two birds with one stone. I took also Kamala on the two-week holiday, to get to know each other. We stayed at my mum’s house for a week, then stayed at a condo near Disney World and I found out, her paranoia and moods made me get moody as well.

We got back from Florida on the morning of September 11th 2001, when the towers collapsed. A few hours later and we would have been stuck in the States, as they grounded all flights. I will never forget that day. As I landed and took my son home to his mum’s (who lived in North London), I went into the office thinking it was going to be another normal day. The TV upstairs in the reception just so

happened to have the news on and I saw the first plane smash into the tower. Obviously at first, everyone thought it was an accident. Shortly after the second plane crashed, we then knew it was no accident. Certain days you will always remember. The fact that we came close to being stranded, always stuck in my mind.

Another incident that will always stay with me was when we did a show in Austria, with Chase & Status, Friction, Loxy, Ink, Vicious Circle and a few others. I knew the promoter as we did a few shows with him over the years and had built up somewhat of a friendship. He offered to pay for me to come as well. Very rarely did I go to shows, but this one was big and I knew it. It would be a laugh, Vicious Circle were known as the party boys of the scene, not many people could keep up with them. After hanging around with Keaton from Usual Suspects, I think that's where they got the vigor.

Unbeknownst to me at the time, one of the Vicious Circle dudes allegedly got given what they thought was cocaine and instantly snorted it, not knowing it really was ketamine. I watched in amazement as he curled up like a fetus. Years before my good mate Roger Ramjet took ketamine and had to call an ambulance to get taken out of Heavens (the gay nightspot in Charing Cross, London). I said to him afterwards, "Why you taking that shit? If it's made to knock out a horse, what do you think it can do to you?"

Anyway, back to Dutty Dan. I was worried, as I am sure he had to go on the decks. The funny thing about it was, just before that, he had been going in on Friction over some dubplate politics kind of

bullshit from the night before at Ministry and had basically hotted him up in front of the whole Hardware crew. Just as I was going to call a paramedic, Dan snapped out of the k-hole and sprung to life. Back to his usual rowdy self again, like nothing ever had happened. I have never been in a k-hole and never want to be, that shit scared the shit out of me.

Sket

Pages 342–344

I was seeing this girl who lived in Coventry, her name was Jessica. I met her when I was out clubbing one night in London and soon started an affair with her that lasted about years, on and off. She occasionally worked in London and we would hook up when she was in town. I knew she had a man, but it was never really spoken about in depth, what we had was just a bit of fun.

As we got on the fifth year of our liaison, things started to get more serious. We spent more time together and she was thinking of moving to London. The distance was always an issue for us. Part of me liked the distance as she was not under my armpit, but part of me wanted to see her more. I was torn. As she began coming round more, she began mentioning her man more often. The way she spoke to me made it seem like they were not getting on well and things were on the decline. She always complained about him.

One day I gave her my business card which had my studio address on it. A few months later I was staying at the studio for a couple of days as my flat had flooded. Turns out her boyfriend had gotten ahold of my card and he was in town. He called me and asked if I was Clayton. He also asked if I knew Jessica and that she was his girl of seven years. I played dumb and said I knew nothing about him. That is when he reeled off my studio address and said he was outside with a gun. He described the studio to a tee, down to the grey shutters trimmed in blue. I did not dare go outside to see if he was out there. The dude was pissed. I told him, she said things were not cool between them. For once, I had to eat humble pie. He is the guy with my address, not the other way around... and he had a strap.

I knew of this guy from Jessica. He was a yardie gangster involved with a big drug gang. Cutty was his name and his reputation preceded him. The only way you end up with a nickname like Cutty is, when you are well versed with a machete. His name alone gave me chills. That was the first time I heard the word "Sket".

I saw Jessica after all that drama and asked her why she was not upfront about this dude. She did not know he was going to get ahold of the business card. It was a pure accident that it ended up in his hands. We continued to meet up, but we slowed down and fizzled out. I lost my urge to see her, as this dude scared the shit out of me and it felt like I was playing with fire. I learnt my lesson about dealing with women that are attached.

Testimonial — Gremlinz

Pages 344–346

I first met Clayton back in 2000, around the time the [Aftermath LP](#) came out. He was over in Toronto for one of the Soundclash events taking place and we were introduced outside of [Eastern Bloc Records](#). One of the first things I remembered him asking, was which tune off of the LP was my favourite to which I replied [Ice Age](#) by Ink. I remember him being pretty shocked by my choice and if I remember correctly, he may have even rung Ink just to tell him. One thing I took away from that brief exchange was, contrary to some of the things I had heard, Clayton seemed really grounded, approachable and genuine.

A few years later, after having Loxy & Ink take my crew and me under their wings, I was reintroduced to Clayton again. Andrew and Giles had arranged for us to make some music for Renegade Hardware and Clayton made a trip back to Toronto, in part, to meet with us. He instantly remembered me from our prior meeting and for the few days he spent hanging with us, we formed a bond.

From there, I got an invite to come and play a set at one of the infamous Renegade Hardware nights at The End, which was a huge honour.⁵ I will never forget my first set there. It marked my first time ever coming to the UK and from the moment I set foot in the country, Clayton, Ink, Loxy and everyone at the office and label (Yoko

⁵Renegade Hardware @ The End - 03.06.2005

, Raamiz, Magic, Mark, Verb, Tony Damage, Damone, Andrew VC, Dan VC, Si VC, Universal Project, Keaton, etc) made me feel welcome like family.

Over the years, Clayton has hosted me many times and let me crash at his house whenever I was over. We have caught bare jokes over the years, and I have a lot of fond memories of those times. I remember when Clayton moved down to Norwood Junction. I assembled his new bed for him, and he gave me a stern warning about how he was going to have a girl over, and it better hold up. A few days after one of the Hardware events at the end I was lying in bed in the guest room, with my now ex-girlfriend, and I heard a panicked cry, “Gabe, come quick!” I immediately thought the worst... The bed must have collapsed... I ran into Clayton’s room anticipating some kind of disaster... Upon arrival, he is sitting up and he goes, “Listen to this!” He then proceeded to play me a recording of someone’s set (I won’t name names) from the recent night at The End with some of the most brutal attempts at beat matching that I have ever heard and proclaimed: “I can’t put this out!” I have to say, I was pretty relieved.

I feel blessed to have Clayton as a friend and grateful that I have had the opportunity to see a lot of the back-end operations involved in running the label and nights, which have helped me with my own endeavours with my own labels etc. One thing I would like to point out is, contrary to popular belief, Clayton is selfless and I’ve seen him take “L”s for the sake of others.

Family for life!

Chapter 28

Social Media

Pages 347–355

I am well known for my rants on social media. I have been trying for years to rein in my opinion, but I find it hard not to respond to morons and idiots. It started with the two big DnB forums, [Dogs On Acid](#) and [Drum & Bass Arena](#), which, in the early two thousands, were the voice piece of the scene. So-called fans managed to actually speak to producers, deejays and record label bosses directly.

Social media, to me, is a gift and a curse. The gift is, the fans of the music get to engage with their favourite artists, the curse is, it attracts fuck boys who spout abuse and troll non-stop.

I have no major problem with ravers cussing off my brand. You do not have to like what we do. Whether it be you talking shit about a release the label put out or saying our events suck. That is people's opinions and I can take that on the chin. When it gets personal and the abuse is not music related, I draw a line.

A few incidents stick out over the years, where I got abuse from some cretins online and I took the steps of finding them. Going back, that notorious shit-cunt site, Dogs On Acid, was the main instigator. It is easy to be a keyboard gangster in today's climate, whilst sitting in your mum's basement with a high cholesterol diet and a PornHub premium account. Some dude took it upon himself to constantly diss the labels on the forum. At first, I was like whatever. Dude is entitled to his own opinion. But like I said, it got off topic. Then dude starts bringing my name into it, so I was like, "Cool..."

The prick mentioned on a post that he was going to Turnmills that bank holiday weekend. The promoter was called Lee and the name of the event was Primal.¹ I called my girlfriend at the time and said, "Whatever you had planned for us to do on the weekend cancel it, as I have to go somewhere and conk a dude in his head for the disrespect he showed me on social media." The plan was to give him an extra conk for making me mash up my plans I had with the wifey just to go deal with this fool.

I enter the packed club with girlfriend in tow and within ten minutes I spot dude. I was smiling to myself, as I realized the trip into the city of London was not in vain. I casually walked up to him, put my arm around him, gripped him tight and whispered, "Your name is Craig isn't it? Do you know who I am, and why I came here?" The look on dude's boat face was like he had seen a ghost. I said to him, "You see how easy you can be found? Why did you feel the

¹26.08.2006, [Primal](#)

need to berate me personally on the Dogs On Acid forum?” As you might have guessed, it was pure stuttering and back-tracking. The response was typical of a fuck boy. He replied, “I am sorry! I don’t want no drama and now I realize, it was a step too far.” So, the reality dawned on dude then and there it wasn’t such a good idea after all to try and act like Charlie Big Bollocks on social media. “All those dudes that were egging you on, I can’t see them now,” I said to him, “I really came down here to break your jaw.” I could see dude wasn’t built like that and the fact he almost shits himself, was enough for me. I said to him, “It’s not a joke dissing people on forums,” and warned him, if he did it again, next time it would turn physical.

I think I am an easy target for trolls and fuckboys, as I rise to the bait. I know I should ignore the fools, but that is not in my nature. I cannot see someone attack my brand, or me personally, and just shrug it off. It brings out the worst in me. Someone might as well slap me in my boat, it amounts to the same thing.

Shortly after I had another incident, same type of thing. Some up-and-coming producer was spouting his mouth about me online. Thing is, I never met dude in my life, and could not understand where his dislike of me came from. I found out, he knew a well-known deejay and I called the deejay and said, “Who is this dude and have you got his number?” Not only did I get his number from Nicky, I also managed to locate his address shortly after from someone else. I call the wanker and say to him, “You live at ‘such-and-such’ address, don’t you?” Dude was baffled and started back-tracking, asking me

to please not turn up at his yard, as he lived with his mum, etc. I was like, “I don’t business who you live with, keep my name out your mouth or you will find me on your doorstep, and I won’t be delivering flowers.”

Another similar incident happened a few years after this up-and-coming producer, who I think has mental problems (which is still no excuse for his behaviour), did a collaboration with a good mate of mine. Dude is like family to me, and when he told me this guy was giving him grief over the track they did together, I got involved, as I do not like to see none of my mates being bullied. I hit him up and asked politely, “What is the problem with you and Gremlinz?” Within minutes, dude was feeling himself and started cussing me, saying I am over-the-hill and how shit my label was. It was he and his brother catching joke, and the disrespectful rhetoric went on for a while. As usual, other dudes were egging them on and both of them were obviously feeling themselves. Dude kept referring to me as a prick.

Within a day or two, I made some phone calls and found out dude’s address. I called him up and dude was still chatting shit, so I sent him a Hardware flyer from an event we had coming up with a post-it note on it with the words: “Hi, it’s the prick.” Soon as he got the letter with flyer enclosed, I got a phone call saying, he doesn’t want no beef and he lives with his parents. I replied, “Why didn’t you think of that when you were acting like Charlie Big Bollocks on Facebook a few days before?”

I probably have the biggest block list on social media out of anyone I know. For some reason people love arguing with me. My mate called me up after a week where I was beefing hard with a few DnB producers and said, "Stop entertaining these clowns... you going back and forth on FB is just giving them notoriety."

One producer, who I will not name as I will breathe life back in his dead career and whose claim to fame is cloning and copying well-known tunes, loved when he and I got into a war of words on Wastebook. Next day he did an interview and was bragging how he got a rise out of me. The idiocy must run in the family, as his sister is a champion sket who is still trying to figure out who the baby fathers of her kids are. You know the people who chat pure breeze on social media as they have no life? She is one of the reasons I am pro-abortion.

One of the few times I got cut down to size on my Wastebook page was over "#breastgate". Contrary to popular belief, not everyone agrees with me on my controversial posts. The story about breastgate was, one morning I went to my local cafe to have my breakfast. I ordered my usual, which was a set breakfast Number 4: two eggs, bacon, sausage, beans, mushrooms, two toast and a cup of tea.

The cafe was my sanctuary, my peace and quiet. I went once a week and just sat and gathered my thoughts. I am tucking into my breakfast and I see some chick breastfeeding her kid. I had to look twice as I was sure that was not the case, I am sure I even rubbed my eyes in disbelief. I got up and left as the whole thing did not sit

well with me.

I went home and put up a post explaining what the chick was doing, and how I did not feel comfortable with it. Within a matter of minutes people took me to task and tore me a new one. I was just being upfront and honest, but the backlash I got surprised the shit out of me. Everyone was like, “She can breastfeed where she wants.” I replied, “Yeah she can but there was a bathroom where she could have done it in privacy.” That comment made it worse and the whole afternoon I got cussed and told what a doughnut I was. I put up an apology later and realized the error of my ways.² The good thing that came out of it was, it showed that not everything I post, would be well received.

I have a lot of fanboys on social media who agree with most everything I write and that does not sit well with me. I am the first one to diss people who always agree with celebrities on social media. Not calling myself a celebrity, but I am well known in the DnB circles and one of the few people who does not sit on the fence. Every time I go out, I get people coming up to me saying how funny I am and that they are on Facebook just to look at my posts. I am not a comedian and not on Facebook for other people’s entertainment.

²Can’t find original, apology: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1808846126103631&id=100009347821762, “One thing i have learnt is you cant be wrong and strong..this morning i made a thread about a lady breast feeding in my local cafe,on reflection the post was in bad taste,part of the problem was i left a bit of the story out,regardless i would like to apologise to anyone who i offended and a few females friend explained about the whole breastfeeding situation so i am totally clued up as to why it happens in public...once again apologies to anyone who i offended it was not intended...thanks So ladies don’t mind me ..carrying on getting those titties out”, 29.03.2017

Too many people in the scene sit on the fence and do not have any opinions. I know artists on certain labels are governed to what they can and cannot say. Each to their own. The number of producers who direct message me and say many of my posts are spot on, but because I am not a popular figure within the scene, they can't be seen publicly to side with me, is huge.

I have been banned from Facebook so many times. At the time of writing this, I got banned last week for putting up a post condemning Israel for bombing Palestine. Before that I exposed a racist and used the n-word in a post to highlight what he wrote. Before that, I put up a picture of white guys getting whipped by blacks, it was a meme depicting reverse racism.³ I do not think any of the bans were fair. But as I have so many haters, the pussyholes like nothing better than to report me.

I find certain aspects of social media alarming, like how much enquoteasis is placed on getting a blue tick on Twitter and Instagram for musicians. I wish they would put the same vigor in honing their craft. But this shows you what is more important to them, acclaim on social media versus respect from people who support your music.

Sometimes I wonder, what our labels and careers would have been like if we came up through the social media era. Seems like in

³https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1913926732262236&id=100009347821762, "so fb banned me for 72 hours on the weekend for posting up a image portraying whites as slaves,obviously a few blue foots/trentons reported me ...oh well..you can stay salty i am going to post what i feel like posting wait it gets better,i was also warned about putting up the post cussing the dude who said niggers gave aids to monkeys..." 03.10.2017.

today's market talent is not needed, as long as you can show your ass on the gram, you should be ok and achieve major success. Social media, in my opinion, is smoke and mirrors.

Testimonial — Dave AK1200

Pages 354–355

I have the rare privilege of writing my testimonial after reading Clayton's book. I will assume there is no need for me to mirror all the others in saying Clayton mutually is to me who I am to Clayton. We have certainly disagreed on social topics, and like him, I prefer to pick up the phone and deal with the matter directly. Just as Clayton explains... We come from a certain school and there is no line between business and personal. Every single thing we stand for, is, and always will be, very personal to us. It's been so long; I can't even tell you how many years ago we met or the circumstance in which we did meet. My guess is early to mid-nineties as I started spending months at a time in England from 1992. I know as an American who has represented DnB and jungle since before it was given such a name, I've always had to work a little harder and be a little louder than my UK colleagues when earning the respect I barely do have after all this time. I can also relate to being an easy target online because of my passion for this culture... I can say one hundred percent, I was always treated with the utmost respect by Clayton, which is much more than I can say about many others in similar roles to him. I can

relate to many of the stories and was pleased to see accountability taken for many things.

I do not think anyone can deny the levels of sacrifice required just to build a presence in such a fickle scene. But to grow your name(s) into a brand forever embedded within the DNA of our particular music history, is a feat that commands respect by everyone involved past, present, and future.

I do not feel Clayton is the villain, nor do I feel he is unfairly misunderstood by people. This book is not a chance for Clayton to dish his dirt and ruffle more feathers. This is merely his platform to provide the reader with an often-overlooked insight many of us might not have considered. Whether the people on the receiving end of his accounts agree or not, the very least they can do is entertain the consideration, that his perspective has merit from his past experiences or maybe even a sporadic release of angst or a retaliatory defense mechanism stemming from things much deeper. We all have our boiling points.

One thing I feel confident in saying is, I believe no wound is beyond repair and no one thing is too great for your mind and spirit to overcome. All we know is what we live and love, and with a little hope we can all get to a better place together and let go of trivial things that otherwise consume us. We are all trying to make the most of our lives for our families, our friends, and for those who follow in our footsteps.

Let this be a form of healing and a reminder that we are only as

strong as our weakest link. Hold Tight.

R E S P E K . . .

Chapter 29

Rule 480

Pages 356–362

Most people know me for the records I have released, and the events I have put on. Both are not easy tasks, especially with the event side of things. The notion that promoters are walking around with fat pockets, mostly is a myth. There are one or two who have managed to amass a small fortune, the rest live hand-to-mouth from event to event. I always say to budding promoters, you are better off doing red or black at a casino. You have a better chance of winning than trying to put on events. The late nineties and early two-thousands were probably the worst times to put on events, as the competition was very fierce.

Regarding signing and putting out tunes (and your tunes had to be exceptional to get into a deejays box), even though the top deejays during that the time were making quite a bit of money. The fact that dubplates cost 30 pound a pop , which was a lot of money, was

factored in and they wouldn't spend that if your tune wasn't worth playing.

During this era, which I consider the best in DnB, you had labels like Metalheadz, Ram, Virus, Prototype, Bad Company and True Playaz who were putting out quality releases all the time. That made me step up my game and go out and try to sign some killers as well.

Most of the A&R and signing tunes for the label was down to me. But Loxy and Ink helped a lot, as they as were the deejays who were in the trenches week in and week out. They both would hear tunes at Music House or at events and alert me to them. I was often at Music House as well. You would have to be quick if a new artist, or an artist not affiliated to the camp, had a tune. If you heard it, liked it, and got in there first, most of the time you could chat to them and sign it on the spot. Obviously, no paperwork was a simple, "I want that for the label." By then Hardware had clout and not many labels could out muscle me for tunes.

There are a few other tracks I missed out, like [Ladies Night](#), from [Demo](#). I think [Dieselboy](#) (the American deejay) put it out on his [imprint](#). Another tune I missed out on was an MC System tune called, [Near Miss](#), a fitting tune for me. It was on dubplate for a while and I spoke to Loxy as he knew Mark/System better than me, I thought I had it in the bag. Then Shy FX came in the running and at the last minute snatched it for his label, [Digital Soundboy](#). What can you do in those situations? I had been guilty of the same thing so how can I complain? That's how I signed [Jackhammer](#) by the Vicious Circle

boys, as I mentioned earlier, we all do these things from time to time.

I'm going to try and explain the physical process of putting out a tune. First thing is the mastering process of the vinyl. You need to take it to somewhere to get cut to master. We used various places over the years, from [George](#) at [Porky's](#) (I used to call him Cowboy George as he wore a big cowboy hat, he looked like something out of a western), then we settled on [Simon](#) at [The Exchange](#). There were other well-known cutting houses like [Metropolis](#), but I was settled with Simon and once I find somewhere where the price is cool and they value our custom, I am cool.

Once the tune is mastered, it is sent off with lacquers where the plates get stamped. In layman's terms, it's a ball of plastic which is then stamped into a vinyl record, etc. Then you have to wait to get the test presses back. A test press is exactly what it is says it is: a test run of the vinyl you will be getting back. If something is not right, this is the time to fix it as once this process is done, there's no going back.

Once you are happy and give the test press a yes, you then order the vinyl. The distributors used to send the record shop your record and from that would get a figure of what to press up at the manufacturing plant. The system worked most of the time, as it helped you not to over order records.

During this time, you would get the artwork done. We had an in-house full-time designer who sorted all our fliers for events, record sleeves, merchandise and adverts for magazines. We had so much

work on and were one of the few labels always releasing records, it made sense to have someone in-house.

For full-time designers, we went through quite a lot over the years, but the best were the Scandinavian duo, Rob and Stian. They later went on to form [Protean Productions](#), which was a formidable force in the competitive nature of the graphic designer world.

From a very early stage, we knew the power of designing record labels and covers that stood out. Our first Hardware release was a ten-inch which mirrored the size of a dubplate at the time. It was marketing genius, as no one at the time was doing that. One thing ravers used to say all the time was, they liked the way our brand was promoted. We tried to do a theme for each release, but that could get rather expensive so we would put represses in-house bags. House bags are sleeves which all look the same and could be reused again and again.

The next step was to hire a PR company to send the track out to the press and radio stations. The best two at the time were Main Source, which was run by Rachael, Vikas and Anton (with Toby, Klaus and Ben helping out in the office). Their rival was Electric PR, run by the infamous Laurence. We used both companies but personally I preferred Main Source.

Rachael and Vikas were chilled, Laurence used to jar me, as we were prob her biggest clients but she always looked at us as minors due to not having that big-name act on our books. I would call regularly to get updates on what she achieved with regard to us getting

features and interviews etc. in magazines, all she used to talk about was Ben, Matt, Karl and Kevin, known to everyone as Ed Rush, Optical, Lemon D and Dillinja. I used to think, “Why you telling me how amazing they’re doing, what has that got to do with our projects?” With her, it was all about name brand and pleasing the heavyweights on her roster. I was like, we pay you in a month two or three times what the other labels are paying you, but you have zero respect for the money we give you. I let Mark deal with her as her tongue was firmly lodged in those boys anal passage.

Me personally, if I ran a PR company, even if I did have favourites I wouldn’t be so blatant in showing that to another label who was spending a lot of money. I saw her a few years back in South East London and she was working in a coffee shop, saying she misses DnB. Well DnB obviously didn’t miss her, and I thought karma has hit her due to the way she handled us.

The promotion of the track is very important, no point having good music if it can’t get put in the right hands. Even now, years after stopping, I think we have one of the biggest discographies in the scene across the three labels we ran. I think we released at least 1.000+ tunes, if not more.

At our height we had, including Mark and me, eight full-time staff. But when the MP3 era came into fruition it really hurt our main income, which was vinyl. During this period, sales were at an all-time low and we had to let a few of the staff go, which is never a good thing. When someone works for you for a few years you naturally

build up a bond and a friendship.

I think the DnB scene was one of the last in the world of electronic music to try and adjust to the world of the MP3. We were very headstrong and most thought, the gravy train, where a big tune of the underground would sell 30.000 records on average and would get licensed to a lot of compilations, would last forever. The harsh reality was: the world was passing us by and if we didn't quickly adjust we would be extinct like the old dinosaurs of yesteryear. Other scenes embraced the new technology, whether it be CDJs (which was a cd player instead of turntables) or selling MP3 files alongside vinyl.

We were not the only label affected by the sudden surge in the success of the MP3. I remember, I went on a panel for a magazine article, [Chris Goss](#) from Hospital was on the panel, also [DJ Krust](#) and a few other artists who worked in the scene. Krust said something which has stuck in my mind since. He said, "We are in the music business not the record business, and the fact that record vinyl sales are dwindling, it's up to us to find a different revenue stream." It was something so simple but a light-bulb went off in my head, it's about selling and packaging our music in different formats. Got to give credit to those boys over at Hospital Records, they were on the digital side of things first while most other labels scoffed at the idea that we could generate money from something that wasn't vinyl or cd based. That was something most didn't think was possible.

At this time, you had [AIM](#) (aka AOL Instant Messenger), which was a popular file-sharing program that everyone was using, and

was a big factor in the demise of vinyl. When producers could send their music all around the world at the press of a little button and then proceed to test out the tune with a CD instead of having to cut plates, the writing was on the wall for vinyl.

It had its glorious years, one of the best things to come from having a studio and offices back in the day was we had a lot of interns or work experience dudes pass through and I have managed to maintain lifetime friendships with them. Got to big up Ali, Miles, Ramaaz, Chris Iceman, Irfan and Cyall, who wasn't exactly an intern but we gave him a four-week trial and loved his attitude and the vibe he brought to the office.

I used to catch jokes when artists who recorded for the label then went on to start their own imprint. After a few months I would get a message, or when I met them in person the first thing they would say is, "It's hard running a label." They thought it was easy to put out music. "No," I used to say, "it's not as easy as you thought," and I think they gained a new respect for the hard work needed to actually get music out to the masses.

Chapter 30

Rawkus

Pages 363–371

We began our partnership with [Rawkus](#) in 1997.¹ Bryan and [Jarrett](#), the owners of Rawkus, were over in the UK for some business meetings and they inquired about the new sound coming out of London (which obviously was DnB).

A mutual mate hit us up and said some American dudes wanted to meet up and talk about working together. Up until that point I had never heard of the label, but sooner rather than later, they made more than enough noise. Not sure why they picked us out of the burgeoning labels at that time. I think it was because our camp was versatile, as we had the hip-hop influenced Trouble on Vinyl sound and the darker futuristic beats with Hardware.

¹https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=2095118730809701&id=100009347821762, “Today will be writing chapters on the deal we had with Rawkus Records in the late 90s and my love of football and my turbulent relationship with Kane Fox...#misterrenegade..”, 25.07.2018

I didn't know at the time, Brad and Jarrett were two rich Jewish guys who went to college together and were funded by [James Murdoch](#), who was the son of the media mogul, [Rupert Murdoch](#). Before the boys left town we met up, I remember they were staying at one of the shittiest hotels in Finsbury Park; it was like straight out a ghetto hood film, but I suppose they just booked whatever room was available.

A little bit after, Rawkus really took off. The first wave of artists was [Company Flow](#), who one of the members, [El-P](#), later went on to make the duo [Run The Jewels](#) with [Killer Mike](#). Even for me, an avid underground rap fan, Company Flow was on space-age shit. Even if you were high, it didn't make hardly any sense. Then you had [Shabaam Shadeeq](#), who you could tell was cut from the [Kool Keith](#), [Dr Octagon](#) tag, and [Mos Def](#) and [Talib Kweli](#). The compilation, [Soundbombing Volume 1](#) firmly put them on the map with the underground cats. [Volume 2](#) was an all-time classic for all you turntablists — check out the [Babu](#) from the [Dilated Peoples](#)' intro, it also featured a young [Eminem](#).

After a few months of back and forth over the phone, I decided to fly to New York and see what their offices were like and to plan in what capacity were we going to link up.

My aunt lived in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, which, back in the day, was similar to Stonebridge or Harlsden. But now it is more closely linked to Dalston or Hackney, due to the gentrification of the area over the years. I ended up making a lot of back and forth trips to

New York, as I was a big hip-hop fan and would often go for a long weekend with a chick and do some shopping and visiting, as my folks and my uncle lived in Queens right by the airport.

I would hit Jamaica Ave in Queens or Fulton Mall in Brooklyn. My favourite spot was either Jimmy Jazz or Doctor Jays, and obviously Footlocker. If I didn't come back from a trip with either Avirex, Timberlands, salvage Levis 501s, white-on-white Jordan low tops, some New Era fitted caps and a few simple tees, I didn't feel right. I loved hitting Macy's, which is our equivalent of Harrods. You could find everything in that place. They had some banging Dominican chicks who worked behind the till and when they heard my accent, which I made sure I added extra to it, that was the cue to try and slide the digits.

One time my friend Eugene happened to be in New York as well. I think we both took our girlfriends at the time on an Xmas shopping trip. Anyway, we went out for a meal minus our girls as we hadn't seen each other for ages and a man night was needed.

I met Eugene during the late eighties, he was a dancer from Covent Garden who graduated to be in a few videos, most notably the [Cookie Crew](#) anthem titled, [I Got to Keep On](#). It is funny, as before we knew each other we had a dislike for one another. He thought I was a flashy baller, as I used to frequent this one particular same club he went to.

The club was called Legends, on new Burlington St off Regent Street, and every Wednesday was a night called Bounced. [DJ Digger](#),

former owner of Wyld Pitch, was the promoter and New Jack Swing was the music of choice.

It was the start of the nineties, and everyone had to step up their game with regards to balling. Every week my boys and I would be parked in the VIP. Eugene later said to me he used to think, “who is that nigga,” as he would see me buy bottles and bottles of champagne.

Those were the years. I was making a lot of money from shotting pills during the rave scene. I was young had no responsibility, every night was a party night. Gucci was another one of my boys, he and I used to have contests to see who could buy the most bottles. Looking back, it was stupid, but I don’t regret it. It was part and parcel of growing up, hitting teens during these times.

I thought Eugene was a light-skinned pretty boy, or, as we say, sweet boy. Eugene was mixed-race, and during those times he was bagging the hottest chicks. I moved to Finsbury Park for a while during the early nineties, and we lived around the corner from each other. Those days were pre-mobile, so you had to ring a man’s yard to see what he was up to. Every time I called Eugene’s yard his dad would answer and say he had gone to the train station to meet a girl.

Not going to lie, I was a hater, but we became very good friends and I consider him my bona fide now.

Back to Rawkus. I remember a few jealous DnB label owners were wondering how we managed to ink a deal like that and team up with, at the time, one of the coolest labels about. I started going to the offices more and more and eventually met up with a few of

the artists I liked. It was very similar to how our studio and offices were run, where everyone used it as a hang out spot.

A few times, I would go up there and go outside and smoke trees with them. Most of them were mad cool. When I told them I was from London, I got asked a million questions. We ended up doing a mix CD which was mixed by [Dara](#) from [Breakbeat Science](#). The mix was called [Renegade Continuum](#) and went on to be cited as the mix which got a lot of American heads and ravers into DnB.

Dara is another dude I have got a lot of time for. Originally from Ireland, he moved to the states and settled in New York, forging out a career as a DnB deejay. I remember Mark and I stayed at his apartment in New York and Dara was in hysterics as Mark and I — as Dara put it — “argued like a cat and a dog,” all the time we were there.

We did a [series of remixes](#) from the Rawkus earlier catalogue, like the [DJ Red](#) Remix of [Physical Jewels](#) by [Sir Menelik](#) and I actually got involved and remixed a Mos Def tune called [Universal Magnetic](#). We ended up giving them quite a few tunes from [DJ Kane](#), [R Notorious J](#), [Genotype](#) and [Monochrome](#), to name a few, for their DnB arm of Rawkus (which was a subsidiary called [Rawkuts](#)). These tracks came out under a [TOV USA](#) umbrella.

I’ve got to give props to [Dan Seliger](#), who was the guy who started Rawkuts, and was a big proponent of early Jungle and DnB. Dan surrounded himself with a few guys who knew the DnB scene, one of them being [Al Seen](#), who was brought in to be label manager and

A&R. Alvaro, being a DnB DJ already, knew a lot of the players doing things. He's still in the music, and his labels are doing well.

Rawkuts went on to release many records and pushed forward the career of many American producers such as the likes of [Gridlok](#), [Juju](#), [Pish Posh](#), [The Burner Brothers](#) and [JL](#) aka [Joe LaPorta](#) (massive mastering engineer). After a while, Rawkus lost its "it" factor. One of the reasons why it got so popular in the first place was the fact, that it was very underground and cool.

After the success of [Soundbombing Volume 1](#) the budgets for videos and outside artists began to grow and things started to turn left from there. Apparently, [Kool G Rap](#) was given way over the odds an advance for an album which never saw the light of day. And I heard, they were haemorrhaging money like crazy due to the success. Our relationship ended shortly after that, as I was busy heavily pushing Hardware at the time and I think they were too busy with the rap stuff.

Eventually, a bid by [RCA](#) to purchase Rawkus came in, and they ran with it. When that went down RCA was only interested in the hip-hop assets and Rawkuts was shut down. When it's all said and done I think Rawkus got too big too quick and became a victim of their own success. But I think, in a way, I helped Rawkus establish a DnB production and label scene in the USA.

Testimonial — DJ Dara

Pages 369–371

It was mid-1996: I was working at the record shop, Temple Records, underneath the [Liquid Sky](#) store in NYC. It was delivery day, so we were emptying boxes and playing the new tunes as they came out. I put a ten-inch from a new label on the turntable and dropped the needle. As soon as the tune started, I got goosebumps. I'd been listening to this tune on a live Grooverider tape for months, and could never find out what it was. That tune was [Flash Gordon](#), by Future Forces and the label was Renegade Hardware. Little did I know then what an impact this label would have on me, and my career.

Fast forward six months, and two friends and I were preparing to open Breakbeat Science, the first all-DnB record store in the US. We figured the best way to ensure we had the upfront tunes was to take a trip to London and go visit some labels. Naturally, TOV and Renegade Hardware was on the list.

We got to the address and were confronted by a steel shutter pulled almost all the way down. After rechecking the address, we pulled up the shutter and knocked on the door. Clayton opened the door and let us in. If memory serves, there were a few of the crew sitting around playing video games. There was also a great mirror on the wall with the Hardware logo in the centre. I wanted it. I remember the first visit was like an interrogation about what was going on with DnB in the US. We answered as best we could, worked

out a deal to buy promos direct and went home happy.

Several months later, the owners of Rawkus Records came by the shop and mentioned they were putting out a mix compilation of Renegade and Hardware tunes in the US. They asked who we thought should do the mix and naturally I said, "Me." Ultimately, I ended up mixing two double-CDs, both of which did well, and really helped springboard my career.

Over the years, I built a good relationship with Clayton & Co. and even had Clayton and Mark stay in my tiny NYC apartment one time. It was awesome being woken up at 7 a.m. by their jet-lagged bickering, but that was par for the course with them.

I spent a lot of time in London over the next several years and always stopped by the studio to check out tunes, hang out and go to the pub across the street. It was always a hive of activity with artists working in both studios, Clayton & Mark arguing somewhere and Yoko keeping things running smoothly. It was a real career highlight for me to play on the TOV stage at Notting Hill Carnival in 2000, and also to play the Carnival after-party a few years later. I have a lot of good memories from that studio in Vauxhall and feel like I was around when history was being made. In my mind, all three labels produced so many classic tunes, and will be remembered as seminal labels in their respective styles. I never did get that mirror, though...

The Outro...

Pages 372–373

In the end, I had to leave the music scene for my mental state, and if I'm honest, I was glad to leave. When it's all said and done, I played a big part in getting this music out around the world. Never in wildest dreams would I have thought when I started out, that I'd achieve so much. I'm grateful and surprised that the genre has lasted so long, and continues to travel around the world. We were here, at the birth of a British-born institution, and I was standing right at the foundation.

You may be wondering, “what's next?” Is this truly the end of my involvement in the music scene?

While I consider myself “retired” DnB on a business level, I still go out to old school themed events from time to time, I like to keep connected with the scene. I often think about what direction I would go in if I returned to the music world. For one, my label would be small and would showcase all of the styles of music that I like. If I dabbled in events again, I would approach them with the same ethos:

small and intimate, mainly for me to come together with my friends and party. You never know, you may just see more from me yet...

For now, I've found new passion as a foodie and budding culinary brand. I've done a few successful restaurant pop-ups at various food festivals, and I had a good run with a batch of original hot sauces. Next year will see us re-launch and re-brand as "Uncle Jerks" featuring a selection of Caribbean favourites on the menu.

I've never been one to sit by with idle hands, if you want success in life, you have to go out and get it, even if it seems impossible. As this chapter ends, another begins, so they say. This is by no means the last from me... watch this space...

Glossary

Pages 374–376, incorrectly named Appendix

Babylon/Feds — Police.

Bandulu — Steal.

Belly — i.e. “Got the belly,” to get the big portion of what you were after (loot/jewellery/drugs)

Boat Race/Boat — Face.

Brass — Prostitute.

Butchers — Have a look.

Butters — A girl with a hot body and an ugly face.

Cats — Crackheads.

Cockney Wide Boy — A wheeler and dealer, market trader, “Jack the Lad” type. A slick talker, quick on his wits.

Cotch — To rest or stay somewhere. To prop something up.

Drum/Yard — Someone’s house.

Drumming — Robbing someone’s house.

Fassyhole — (Insult) Derogatory term for someone who is irritating or has offended you.

Hard food — Crack.

I don't business — I don't care/I'm not concerned.

Jack Jones — On your own/solo.

Jim Screech — To sneak around. To do things surreptitiously.

Juggling — Selling drugs.

Mandem — A group of men.

Manor — Your area.

Paper — Money.

Shotting — Dealing drugs.

Sket — Whore.

Tom Foolery — Cockney rhyming slang meaning jewellery.

Wasteman — (Insult) Someone who does nothing with their life (or nothing much).

Wet — i.e., “Wet him,” to cut someone with a blade.

Youts — Young people/youngers.

Special Thanks and Contributions

(In no particular order)

Pages 377–379

Mark

Giles

Andrew

Keaton

Nicolas

Helen Petrou

Jade Fiahlo

Nadia Etienne

Aaron UP

Carol Reed

Tony Damage

Emanuel aka Magic

Raamiz aka Shinobi

Irfan
Chris The Iceman Marsh
Chris Intaface
Chris Inperspective
Sahra
Maxine
Terri
Sandra
Jo Hines
Faye Roffe
Chris Renegade
Cyall Victor
Gucci
Joe Dog
Eddie BI
Danny Baitman
Roger Ramjet
Chris Heineken Harris
Rodney P
Yoko
Nabeila
Teri Pordage
Chef
Sophie
Colin Escape

Pauline aka Sweetpea

Milena Lukic

Gremlinz

Damone aka Demus

Raj Hotstuff

Dave Miner

Brad DJ Lush

Hung Tran aka. The Mad Chineyman

Susie Macyong

Latifa

Adi J

Dushi

Andy & Lydia Buckley

Kyoko

Paul Ibiza

DJ Kane

Deon

Warren Spectralband

Natasha

Alison

Eddie Otchere

Stanley

Nick Dettmar

Zoe Fox

AND

Frazer

(Keep your head up bro, you'll be home soon)²

²Omitted Grooverider, Fabio, Uncle Dugs, these were in the draft.

**Special thanks to my team
behind the scene who mad
this book possible:**

Joel Hope

Tom Denton

Wendy Lynn Johnson

Peter DJ Kid

Cover Blurb

Renegade

LOVED BY FEW. HATED BY MANY. RESPECTED BY ALL

An explosive, no-holds barred submersion into the shadowy world of Drum and Bass, courtesy of one of its most controversial and influential characters, the infamous Clayton Hardware. A pioneering figure, his labels created a sound alongside parties that shaped a global music culture. After three decades behind the scene, Clayton blows the lid on the hidden underground unbelievable world of DNB!

Journeying over several decades from proto-rave scene sound systems and blues parties of the mid eighties through to the second summer of love and the birth of UK dance music with Hardcore, Jungle and Drum & Bass, nothing gets left out. Having left his own indelible mark on the UK rave scene, he has plenty of tales to tell! It's the story of the rave scene and Drum & Bass music, all through the eyes of a man whose life hasn't been quite the average.

Appendix



Photo of Renegade Hardware artists. Circa 1998. From left to right: Clayton Hines, Raiden, Elhornet, Loxy, Ink, Yoko, Mark Hill, D-Bridge, Vegas, Aaron McDuffus, Keaton, Geoff Taylor-Karrer, Maldini. As all are wearing winter clothes, so this photo was taken around November or December 1998, as Bad Company left RH that winter. See Chapter “Black Thursday”.

80 DJS 20 MCS
10 HRS 5 ROOMS
**LAST EVER
HARDWARE**
#RH20FINALCHAPTER



SAT 6TH FEB 2016
THE CORONET
28 NEW KENT RD, LONDON SE1 6TJ

Flyer for the last ever Renegade Hardware Event on 06.02.2016



Clayton thinking about going to Fierce's house. See chapter "I'm Vegan now".

THE END



PRESENTS

FULL CYCLE FRIDAY 27 JUNE

RONI SIZE, DJ KRUST, DJ DIE, DJ SUV, MC DYNAMITE,
SPECIAL GUESTS FLYNN & FLORA. 11-5 £8/£10

SKINT ON FRIDAYS FRIDAY 4 JULY

FATBOY SLIM, HARDKNOX, BENTLEY RHYTHM ACE, MIDFIELD GENERAL,
PLUS SPECIAL GUEST KOOL HERC. 11-5 £8/£10

SUB-TERRAIN SATURDAY 5 JULY

DARREN EMERSON, MR.C, TREVOR ROCKCLIFFE, MURF, ADAM FREELAND,
LAYO, DEANO, STICK. 11-7 £10/£13

BULLET FRIDAY 11 JULY

CAJMERE, MATTHEW 'BUSHWACKA' B, LAYO,
SPECIAL GUESTS NUPHONIC RECORDS. 11-5 £7/£12

ATHLETICO RECORDS LAUNCH PARTY SATURDAY 12 JULY

SIMON FATHEAD, KIRSTIE MCARA, ALEX SPARROW,
SPECIAL GUESTS FREDDY FRESH & PSYCHELIA SMITH (LIVE) 11-7 £10/£12

NO U-TURN AND RENEGADE HARDWARE FRIDAY 18 JULY

ED RUSH, BAILEY, FIERCE, FUTURE FORCES, KANE, TRACE, NICO (LIVE PA). 11-5 £8/£10



THE END WEST CENTRAL STREET WC1 TEL 0171 419 9199 FAX 0171 419 9099
www.the-end.co.uk



Flyer with the first ever Renegade Hardware party at The End.
18.97.1998.



Lineup for the Outlook Renegade Hardware party. 05.09.2015



Cover of Renegade by OnlyHope. Source: <https://www.oh-artist.com/renegade>. Clayton did not credit him for his artwork, but as he is an inhouse graphics designer, i believe this was not necessary.

Index

- 3rd Party, [89](#)
- 4 Hero, [87](#)
- 4 Horsemen, [218](#), [221](#)
- 5th Avenue (Sound System),
[267](#)
- A Guy Called Gerald, [88](#)
- Aaron McDuffus, [158](#), [224](#), [227](#),
[234](#)
- ABC, [187](#)
- Able Danger, [292](#)
- Absolute 2 Records, [88](#)
- Adam Tolba, [224](#)
- Adi J, [291](#), [292](#), [342](#)
- Africa Centre, [62](#), [268](#)
- Agman Gora, [291](#)
- Ajit Steyns, [227](#)
- Al Seen, [371](#), [372](#)
- Ali G, [183](#)
- Alistair Roberts, [58](#), [80](#)
- Alix Depauw, [179](#)
- Alix Perez, [179](#), [180](#)
- Alley Cat, [251](#)
- Alvin Donald, [288](#)
- Amy, [3](#)
- Andrew Campbell, [155](#), [212](#),
[221](#), [222](#), [232](#), [235](#), [347](#)
- Andrew Greening, [224](#), [234](#),
[348](#)
- Andy C, [4](#), [5](#), [91](#), [136](#), [147](#), [149](#),
[223](#), [244](#), [250](#), [270](#), [272](#),
[275](#), [280](#), [304](#)
- Andy Skopes, [291](#)
- Anger Management, [258](#)
- Ant-TC1, [292](#)
- Antagonist, [291](#)
- Anton Trailer, [362](#)

Aquascutum (shop), [62](#)
 Arcadia Spectacular, [80](#)
 Arcane, [291](#)
 Architecture, [231](#)
 Archway Boys (gang), [59](#)
 Area 1 Records, [305](#)
 Arsenal London, [288](#)
 Ash-Attack, [275](#)
 Astoria, [83](#), [84](#), [120](#)
 ATM Magazine, [145](#), [261](#), [278](#)
 Atomics (event), [268](#)
 Audio, [291](#)

 Bad Company, [133](#), [195](#), [202](#),
 [204](#), [233](#), [234](#), [244](#), [250](#),
 [256](#)
 Baffled, [139](#)
 Bailey, [1](#), [153](#), [154](#), [157–161](#),
 [163](#), [171](#), [172](#), [271](#), [300](#)
 Bar Rumba, [xiii](#), [6](#), [293](#), [306](#)
 Bassground Recordings, [293](#),
 [295](#)
 Basslline, [292](#)
 Bassman, [281](#)
 Battery, [291](#)

 Battle of the Emcees, [277](#)
 Bay B Kane, [87](#)
 Bayders Crew, [130](#)
 BBC, [171](#)
 BBC Radio 1Xtra, [163](#)
 BBC Radio One, [217](#)
 BC Recordings, [237](#), [360](#)
 Beat Freak, [80](#), [132](#)
 Beat Street, [57](#)
 Ben Settle, [363](#)
 Ben Summer, [362](#)
 Benga, [256](#)
 Benneton (shop), [62](#)
 Best of British, [194](#), [277](#)
 Bevin Denton, [299](#)
 Big ???, [317](#)
 Big Luke, [291](#)
 Big Rewind, [168](#)
 Billy Daniel Bunter, [244](#)
 Bingo Beats, [223](#)
 Biology (event), [121](#)
 Bionic, [61](#)
 Birmingham City F.C., [119](#)
 Birmingham Zulu Warriors,
 [119](#)

Bitin Back, 186
 Bjork, 298
 Black Market Records, 59, 81, 202, 233, 326
 Black Thursday, 4, 141, 199, 217, 230, 231, 234, 327, 329
 Blacka, 292
 Blackeye, 291, 292
 Blade, 62
 Bloods(gang), 315
 Bluebird, 59
 Bluenote, 217, 221, 269
 Bodysnatch, 88
 Boiler House, 61
 Bon Jovi, 331
 Bonnie Blaze, 292
 Bonze, 58
 Boris Becker, 31
 Brad Leonhard, xv
 Bradders Brown, 292
 Brain (club), 325
 Brainkillers, 99
 Break, 174, 175, 254
 Breakage, 161
 Breakbeat Science, 371, 373
 Breakin 2: Electric Boogaloo, 57
 Breakin Science, 65, 108, 147, 148, 168, 186, 276, 277, 279, 281–287, 312, 329
 Brian Brater, 367
 Bridge (rave), 286, 287
 Bridge Atterbury, 287
 Britain First, 77
 British National Party, 77
 Brockie, xviii, 92, 99, 132, 150, 168–170, 244, 275, 304, 336
 Brothers Glenn, 92
 Bruno Greenaway, 82
 Bryan Brater, 368
 Bryan Gee, xviii, 121, 183, 244, 249, 292
 BTK, 291
 Bunny Reds, 61
 Cabbie, 195
 Café de Paris, 154, 235
 Calibre, 251

Callide, [292](#)
 Calyx, [255](#), [259](#)
 Canadian National Exhibition,
 [xv](#)
 Capacity, [334](#)
 Capricorn Rockers, [56](#)
 Carl Collins, [141](#), [183](#)
 Carl Hovland, [212](#)
 Carnival (Sound System), [59](#)
 Caroline ???, [249](#), [250](#)
 Caspa, [256](#)
 Cause 4 Concern, [97](#)
 Caveman, [62](#)
 Cecil G (shop), [62](#)
 Centreforce, [99](#)
 Chase & Status, [111](#), [147](#), [152](#),
 [212](#), [250](#), [288](#), [344](#)
 Chelsea F.C., [119](#)
 Chelsea Headhunters, [119](#)
 Chester P, [62](#)
 Chris Ball, [257](#), [258](#)
 Chris Goss, [173](#), [364](#)
 Chris Hansen, [241](#), [245](#)
 Chris Hovland, [234](#)
 Chris Inperspective, [181](#), [291](#)
 Chris Intaface, [292](#)
 Chris Lavin, [212–215](#)
 Chris Reckless, [60](#)
 Chris Renegade, [3](#), [292](#), [322](#)
 Chris Segrides, [212](#)
 Chris Suspects, [212](#)
 Christian Coral, [298](#)
 Chrome Angels, [57](#)
 Clarity, [291](#)
 Clarky, [297](#)
 Clash of the Titans, [295](#)
 Cleveland Watkiss, [297](#), [301](#)
 Clive Simon Broe, [165](#), [257](#), [258](#)
 Club Mazzo (club), [293](#)
 Coda Music Agency, [147](#), [250](#),
 [255–257](#)
 Code 071, [130](#)
 Cold Fusion, [65](#), [164](#), [292](#)
 Coliseum, [275](#)
 Company Flow, [368](#)
 Cookie Crew, [369](#)
 Coronet, [5](#), [6](#)
 Cosmic Jam, [58](#)
 Covent Garden, [56](#), [57](#), [62](#)
 Craggz, [37](#)

Crazy Club, [120](#)
 Crystal Palace F.C., [15](#)
 Crystal Rooms (Venue), [71](#)
 Cutmaster Swift, [58](#)
 Cylon Recordings, [224](#), [235](#)

 D-Bridge, [133](#), [140](#), [174](#), [201](#),
 [327](#)
 D&B Arena, [149](#), [166](#), [257](#), [277](#),
 [349](#)
 Daddy Rusty, [61](#)
 Daddy Sandy, [61](#)
 Damage, [292](#)
 Damone Edwards, [348](#)
 Dan C Webb, [224–226](#), [234](#), [235](#),
 [344](#), [345](#), [348](#)
 Dan Seliger, [371](#)
 Daniel Stein, [201](#), [204](#)
 Danny Breaks, [87](#)
 Danny Francis, [57](#)
 Danny Rampling, [118](#), [120](#)
 Dark n Cold, [59](#)
 Darrell James, [161](#)
 Darren Jay, [250](#)
 Darren Lewis, [211](#)
 Darren Styles, [244](#)
 Darren White, [133](#), [201](#), [236](#)
 Dave Pearce, [58](#)
 Dave Taylor ???, [328](#)
 David Bowie, [298](#)
 David Henry, [178](#)
 David Kennett, [255](#)
 David Piccioni, [81](#)
 David Rodigan, [81](#), [244](#)
 DBR UK, [291](#)
 Deeroy, [292](#)
 Def Tickets, [286](#)
 Dekafex, [328](#)
 Delight FM, [275](#)
 Demo, [360](#)
 Dennis McFarlane, [128](#)
 Derek B, [79](#)
 Derrick May, [135](#)
 Detroit (shop), [62](#)
 Devious D, [304](#)
 Dextrous, [91](#), [136](#), [291](#)
 Dickie Dirts (shop), [62](#)
 Dieselboy, [360](#)
 Digital, [xiv](#), [292](#)
 Digital Soundboy, [360](#)

Dilated Peoples, 368
 Dillinja, xiv, 150, 182, 183, 185,
 186, 315, 336, 363
 Diluk Dias, 166
 DJ 279, 275
 DJ Andy, 273
 DJ Ash Attack, 233
 DJ Chef, 161, 262, 265, 292
 DJ Dara, 371
 DJ Digger, 369
 DJ E, 292
 DJ Flames, 204
 DJ Fresh, 133, 201, 203, 204,
 234–236
 DJ HMS, 120
 DJ Hype, 5, 132, 147, 148, 183,
 244, 250
 DJ Kane, 130, 131, 133, 201,
 283, 325–329, 371
 DJ Kontrol, 230
 DJ Lee, 134, 297
 DJ Marky, 273
 DJ Pogo, 58, 127
 DJ Profile, 233
 DJ Rap, 140, 304
 DJ Reality, 230
 DJ Red, 132, 201, 327, 371
 DJ Ron, xviii, 80, 92, 132, 155,
 304
 DJ Seduction, 244
 DJ Skinny, 146, 151
 DJ SL, 92, 304
 DJ Slip, xi, xii, xiv
 DJ Sly, 281
 DJ SS, 188, 248, 258, 332
 DJ Trace, 5, 94–97
 DJ Zinc, 150, 223
 DMC, 58
 Doc Scott, 96, 134, 229, 251,
 292, 297, 298, 301
 Dogs On Acid, 238, 239,
 349–351
 Dom & Roland, 96, 271, 292
 Don FM, 99
 Donovan Badboy Smith, 250
 Double O, 291
 Dougal, 244
 Dr. Dre, 336
 Dr. Octagon, 368
 Drax, 58

Dream (rave), [122](#)
 Drumsound & Bassline Smith, [291](#)
 Dub for Life, [257](#)
 Duncan Stahl, [328](#)
 Dungeons (event), [118](#)
 Dylan, [111](#), [221](#)

 Eastern Bloc Records, [347](#)
 Eastman, [99](#), [150](#), [274](#), [278](#)
 EBK, [224](#), [292](#)
 Echo Location, [146](#), [147](#), [250](#), [251](#), [253](#)
 Echoes (magazine), [127](#)
 Ed Keeley, [145–149](#), [151](#), [152](#)
 Ed Rush, [4](#), [95–97](#), [229](#), [244](#), [250](#), [303](#), [363](#)
 Eddie Otchere, [3](#)
 Eddie Richards, [118](#)
 Eksman, [275](#)
 El Hornet, [291](#)
 El-P, [368](#)
 Electric Ballroom, [57](#)
 Electric PR, [362](#)
 Elevation (event), [88](#)

 Ellis Dee, [87](#), [120](#)
 Eminem, [368](#)
 Emma ???, [141](#)
 Emotif Recordings, [293](#)
 Empire, [xiv](#)
 EPMD, [121](#)
 Eruption FM, [99](#)
 Escape, [292](#)
 Eskimo Noise, [299](#)
 ESP Promotions, [251](#)
 Euphoria (event), [93](#)
 Everton Roast, [91](#)
 Evil B, [281](#), [282](#)
 Evolution Artists, [165](#), [257](#)
 Exposure (party), [275](#)

 Fabio, [xviii](#), [118](#), [120](#), [134](#), [135](#), [163](#), [171](#), [244](#), [248](#), [249](#), [297](#), [304](#), [332](#)
 Faith No More, [301](#)
 Family Function (club), [268](#)
 Fantasy FM, [99](#)
 Fantazia (rave), [122](#)
 Fatman D, [281](#), [283](#)
 Fearless, [xiv](#)

Fierce, [96](#), [97](#), [174](#), [176–178](#)
 Fingerpop (club), [268](#)
 Fingers, [58](#)
 Flight, [291](#)
 Fokus, [292](#)
 Fokus Recordings, [186](#)
 Fool's Paradise (club), [81](#)
 Forest Gate, [120](#)
 Formation Records, [88](#), [332](#)
 Fox, [291](#)
 Francesco Caccamo, [151](#), [253](#)
 Frankie Bones, [120](#)
 Friction, [1](#), [5](#), [76](#), [142](#), [145–149](#),
 [151](#), [250](#), [275](#), [288](#), [294](#),
 [344](#)
 Full Cycle Records, [269](#)
 Funky Flirt, [304](#)
 Future Cut, [xiv](#), [4](#), [211](#), [222](#), [230](#)
 Future Forces Inc, [96](#), [174](#), [182](#),
 [201](#), [373](#)
 Future Thinkin, [292](#)
 Fuzion UK, [292](#)

 G Taylor Karrer, [227](#)
 Gabriel Au, [348](#)
 Gavin Cheung, [80](#)
 Gavin Henry, [139](#)
 Gee 2 (shop), [62](#)
 General Levy, [90](#)
 Generation Dub, [323](#)
 Genesis promotion, [257](#)
 Genotype, [132](#), [134](#), [140](#), [201](#),
 [291](#), [302](#), [371](#)
 George Kelly, [92](#)
 George Peckham, [361](#)
 Gerry Francis, [16](#)
 Get Rich Crew, [275](#)
 Giles Mensah, [155](#), [212](#), [217](#),
 [219](#), [220](#), [237](#), [273](#), [347](#)
 Go for the Juggler, [127](#)
 Goldie, [xviii](#), [5](#), [93](#), [94](#), [153–155](#),
 [160](#), [297](#), [302](#), [303](#)
 Gossip (club), [81](#)
 Grant Epidemik, [204](#)
 Grant Smith, [277](#), [285](#)
 Gremlinz, [xiii](#), [111](#), [291](#), [292](#),
 [352](#)
 Gridlok, [258](#), [292](#), [372](#)
 Groove Connection, [135](#),
 [248–250](#), [332](#)

Groove Records (Shop), [59](#)
 Grooverider, [xviii](#), [92](#), [118](#), [120](#),
 [147](#), [166](#), [229](#), [242–244](#),
 [249](#), [251](#), [292](#), [297](#), [298](#),
 [301](#), [304](#), [373](#)
 Gus Lawrence, [128](#)
 Guvnor, [298](#)
 Guvnor General, [99](#)
 Guy Ritchie, [48](#)

 Hacienda, [122](#)
 Handy, [291](#)
 Hardleaders, [141](#), [142](#), [183](#)
 Harvey Keitel, [279](#)
 HBO, [183](#)
 Heat, [277](#), [278](#)
 Heaven, [173](#)
 Heaven (club), [84](#)
 Helen Petrou, [315](#), [322](#)
 Herbie Hancock, [136](#)
 Hijack, [62](#)
 Hijak, [291](#), [292](#)
 Hippodrome, [42](#), [51](#), [58](#)
 Hitman Records (Shop), [59](#), [81](#)
 Hive, [142](#), [215](#)

 Hixxy, [244](#)
 HLZ, [292](#)
 Hospital Records, [170](#), [172](#), [173](#),
 [364](#)
 Hostile Takeover, [295](#)
 Howard Jonathan Gray, [254](#)
 Human Imprint Records, [360](#)

 Iain Bardouille, [128](#)
 Ibiza Records, [88](#)
 IC3, [275](#), [291](#), [292](#)
 Ill Tempa, [291](#)
 Illmatika, [291](#)
 Informer (magazine), [145](#)
 Ink, [3](#), [5](#), [76](#), [110](#), [141](#), [155](#), [159](#),
 [165](#), [175](#), [212](#), [217](#), [218](#),
 [220](#), [221](#), [227](#), [230](#), [231](#),
 [237](#), [244](#), [250](#), [273](#), [284](#),
 [289](#), [291](#), [293](#), [294](#), [297](#),
 [313](#), [329](#), [334](#), [344](#), [347](#),
 [360](#)
 Innovation, [277](#), [285](#), [286](#)
 Intasound, [162](#)
 Inter, [287](#), [291](#)
 Inter City Firm, [119](#)

Invaderz, [161](#)
 Ipswich Town F.C., [15](#)
 IQ Collective, [186](#)
 Iyiola Babalola, [211](#)

 J-Swif, [291](#)
 Jade, [291](#)
 Jade Fialho, [168](#), [300](#), [321](#), [322](#)
 Jah Shaka, [244](#)
 James Murdoch, [368](#)
 Jamie Bashington, [291](#)
 Jamie White, [291](#)
 Jane Conneely, [294](#)
 Jarret Myer, [367](#)
 Jarrett Myer, [368](#)
 Jarvis Sandy, [121](#)
 Jason Chue, [241](#)
 Jason Ellis, [128](#)
 Jason Maldini, [133](#), [140](#), [201](#),
 [203](#), [236](#), [327](#)
 Jay Strongman, [61](#)
 Jay-Z, [158](#), [169](#)
 JC, [292](#)
 Jeremy Kyle, [169](#)
 Jesta, [xiii](#)

 Jim Atomics, [268](#)
 JL, [372](#)
 Jo Hines, [298](#)
 Joe LaPorta, [372](#)
 Jon Stewart, [136](#)
 Jonathan “Jho” Oakley, [147](#)
 Jonny L, [87](#)
 Juan Atkins, [135](#)
 Juju, [372](#)
 Jumping Jack Frost, [xviii](#), [92](#),
 [120](#), [132](#), [134](#), [185](#), [243](#),
 [244](#), [249](#), [292](#), [327](#)
 Jungle Fever, [99](#), [256](#), [274](#), [277](#),
 [278](#), [285](#), [339](#)
 Jungle Splash, [89](#), [132](#)
 Just Jungle, [132](#), [134](#)
 Justin Richardson, [131](#), [134](#),
 [140](#), [201](#), [302](#)

 K-Eye, [291](#)
 Kalm, [291](#)
 Karl Francis, [182–185](#), [363](#)
 Karl Hovland, [213](#), [215](#)
 Keaton, [5](#), [97](#), [111](#), [158](#),
 [212–216](#), [221](#), [225](#), [227](#),

[230](#), [234](#), [292](#), [293](#), [344](#),
[348](#)
 Kemal + Rob Data, [231](#)
 Kemal Okan, [230–233](#), [235–237](#),
[239](#)
 Kemet, [89](#)
 Kemistry, [297](#)
 Kenny Ken, [248](#), [275](#), [304](#)
 Kenny Levi, [263](#)
 Kevin King, [363](#)
 Kevin Saunderson, [135](#)
 Khanage, [180](#), [254](#), [292](#)
 Kickin Records, [141](#)
 Kid Batchelor, [118](#)
 Killa Kela, [328](#)
 Killbreak, [292](#)
 Killer Mike, [368](#)
 King Henry VII, [203](#)
 King Robbo, [58](#)
 King Tubby, [241](#)
 Kingsley Roast, [91](#)
 Kiss FM, [88](#), [134](#)
 Kissez (club), [57](#)
 Klashnekoff, [62](#)
 Klaus Hill, [362](#)
 Klax, [292](#)
 Klute, [292](#)
 Knowledge Magazine, [3](#), [145](#),
[149](#)
 Konflikt, [141](#), [229–232](#), [234](#), [236](#),
[238](#), [239](#)
 Kontrol, [291](#)
 Kool FM, [93](#), [99](#), [136](#), [161](#), [168](#),
[304](#)
 Kool G Rap, [372](#)
 Kool Keith, [368](#)
 Krust, [364](#)
 Kryptomedic, [292](#)
 Kyrist, [291](#)

 Labello Blanco Recordings, [88](#)
 Labrinth (rapper), [218](#)
 Labyrinth, [88](#), [118](#)
 Lady Su, [291](#)
 Laura Tan, [175](#), [179](#), [180](#)
 Laurence Verfaillie, [362](#)
 Lawrence Hughes, [212](#)
 Lee Majors, [187](#)
 Lemon D, [363](#)
 Lennie DeIce, [88](#)

Lenny McLean, [48](#), [49](#)
 Leo Roche, [135](#)
 Leon Chue, [241](#), [243](#), [244](#)
 Leroy Small, [188](#)
 Let It Roll Festival, [98](#)
 Lex TC, [291](#)
 Liberyt (party), [275](#)
 Lil Louis, [118](#)
 Lily Allen, [4](#), [212](#)
 Limited E Edition, [88](#)
 Liquid Sky, [373](#)
 Live 2 Break, [56](#)
 Liverpool F.C., [323](#)
 LL Cool J, [44](#)
 Lloyd Coxson, [32](#), [61](#), [81](#), [241](#)
 Lloyd Galloway, [277](#), [285–287](#)
 Llyod Life, [275](#)
 Logan D, [282](#)
 Logistics, [172](#)
 Lomax, [133](#)
 London Allstars, [56](#)
 London Weekend Radio, [79](#)
 Loot (magazine), [129](#)
 Loxy, [3](#), [5](#), [76](#), [110](#), [141](#), [142](#),
 [155](#), [158](#), [159](#), [165](#), [171](#),
 [175](#), [212](#), [213](#), [218](#), [221](#),
 [224](#), [227](#), [230](#), [232](#), [234](#),
 [235](#), [244](#), [250](#), [291](#), [293](#),
 [294](#), [297](#), [344](#), [347](#), [360](#)
 LTJ Bukem, [xviii](#), [97](#), [134](#), [135](#),
 [156](#), [157](#), [217](#), [249](#)
 Lucky Spin Recordings, [269](#)
 Lucy Putman, [255–257](#)
 LX One, [291](#)
 Lyceum, [57](#)

 M Beat, [90](#)
 Madhatter Trevor, [61](#)
 Magic, [292](#), [348](#)
 Main Attraction, [80](#)
 Main Source, [xii](#), [230](#), [362](#)
 Mainstage Artist, [254](#)
 Majistrate, [282](#)
 Malcolm McLaren, [57](#)
 Maldini, [174](#), [201](#), [291](#)
 Malx, [291](#)
 Mampi Swift, [75](#), [147](#), [275](#), [291](#)
 Manchester United, [177](#), [322](#)
 Manga, [305](#)
 Manic, [291](#)

Manifest, [3](#), [292](#)
 Mantmast, [291](#)
 Mantra, [291](#)
 Marc Clair, [128](#)
 Marcus Intalex, [xiii](#), [136](#), [251](#)
 Mario Kempes, [15](#)
 Mark Bauer, [251](#), [253](#)
 Mark Hill, [xiv](#), [xviii](#), [6](#), [64](#), [65](#),
 [70](#), [108](#), [118](#), [120](#), [129](#),
 [137–143](#), [157](#), [201](#), [237](#),
 [239](#), [240](#), [267](#), [270](#), [274](#),
 [276](#), [278](#), [285](#), [307](#), [325](#),
 [326](#), [328](#), [348](#), [363](#), [371](#),
 [374](#)
 Mark Moore, [60](#)
 Mark O'Neill, [132](#), [201](#)
 Mark Ranger, [89](#)
 Marley Marl, [260](#), [261](#), [297](#)
 Marshall ???, [146](#)
 Marvin Haggler, [35](#)
 Matlok, [140](#)
 Matt Quinn, [363](#)
 Matteo Cavo, [164](#)
 Maurice, [292](#)
 Maxi Priest, [61](#)
 Maztek, [164](#), [165](#)
 MC 2Shy, [259](#), [287](#), [288](#)
 MC AD, [261](#), [287](#), [288](#), [291](#), [292](#)
 MC Conrad, [217](#)
 MC Convention, [277](#)
 MC Det, [275](#), [304](#)
 MC Eksman, [281–283](#)
 MC Fearless, [99](#)
 MC Five O, [93](#)
 MC Flux, [297](#)
 MC Foxy, [279–281](#)
 MC GQ, [155](#), [185](#), [250](#), [270](#), [271](#),
 [292](#), [297](#)
 MC Herbie, [281](#)
 MC ID, [287](#), [288](#), [292](#)
 MC Justice, [297](#)
 MC Mello, [62](#)
 MC Rage, [259–261](#), [287](#), [288](#)
 MC Trigga, [281](#)
 MC Verse, [287](#), [291](#)
 MC Yankee, [285](#)
 MCPS, [184](#)
 Mechanizim, [292](#)
 Medik A, [291](#)
 Mel ???, [212](#)

Melinki, [292](#)
 Melisa Morgan, [81](#)
 Memtrix, [292](#)
 Mendoza (club), [118](#)
 Meredith Coral, [298](#)
 Metalheadz, [xiii](#), [xviii](#), [154](#), [155](#),
 [160](#), [222](#), [257](#), [259](#), [269](#),
 [297](#), [298](#), [302](#), [304](#), [321](#),
 [334](#), [360](#)
 Meth, [291](#)
 Metropolis Mastering, [361](#)
 Miami Music Conference, [xi](#),
 [135](#)
 Michael West, [80](#), [132](#)
 Mickey D, [81](#)
 Micky Finn, [xi](#), [xii](#), [93](#), [186–188](#),
 [249](#), [304](#)
 Mike Allen, [58](#)
 Mike Banks, [135](#)
 Mike Slammer, [277](#), [285](#)
 Millwall Bushwackers, [119](#)
 Millwall F.C., [47](#), [119](#)
 Mindscape, [291](#)
 Miss EP, [292](#)
 Miss Represent, [291](#)
 Mistabishi, [76](#)
 Mister Palmer, [61](#)
 MJ Cole, [139](#), [140](#)
 Mob Tactics, [291](#)
 Mobb Deep, [227](#)
 Mollie Collins, [252](#), [253](#)
 Monie Love, [62](#)
 Monochrome, [371](#)
 Moondance, [82](#), [185](#), [186](#)
 Mos Def, [368](#), [371](#)
 Movement, [293](#)
 Moving Shadow, [88](#), [331](#)
 Mr Byrite (shop), [62](#)
 Mr C, [118](#)
 Mr. Groove Records (shop), [81](#)
 Mud Club, [60](#), [113](#)
 Music House, [xiii](#), [132](#), [154](#), [217](#),
 [221](#), [232](#), [237](#), [241–244](#),
 [272](#), [304](#), [327](#), [360](#)
 Mutoid Waste Company, [80](#)
 My Nu Leng, [150](#)
 Nadia Stepan, [322](#)
 Nas, [253](#)
 Nasty Love (Sound System),

267
 Natural, [xiii](#), [xiv](#), [xix](#)
 NC-17, [291](#)
 Network, [291](#)
 Nick ???, [256](#), [274–276](#), [278](#),
 [279](#), [285](#)
 Nick Reddick, [254](#), [255](#)
 Nick White, [254](#)
 Nicky Blackmarket, [60](#), [81](#), [275](#),
 [336](#)
 Nicky Holloway, [120](#)
 Nico Sykes, [94–96](#), [129](#), [174](#),
 [231](#), [254](#), [269](#)
 Nigger Jimmy, [61](#)
 No U Turn, [94–96](#), [129](#), [174](#),
 [231](#), [254](#), [269](#)
 Nocturnal, [216](#), [224](#), [292](#)
 Noise Factory, [89](#)
 Noisia, [98](#), [231](#), [295](#)
 Noize Complaint, [291](#)
 Nolidge, [291](#)
 Nomine, [xii](#)
 Noodles, [132](#)
 Nookie, [80](#), [87](#), [90](#)
 Norris Windross, [92](#)
 North Base, [291](#)
 Notting Hill Carnival, [374](#)
 Nu Breed, [281](#)
 Nu:Tone, [172](#)
 Nuclear MC, [291](#)
 Numb, [xiv](#)
 Nutrament Rock Box, [59](#), [80](#)
 Obi Asika-Iweka, [146–148](#), [250](#),
 [251](#), [253](#), [254](#)
 Obi One, [291](#)
 Oliver Lomax, [134](#), [156](#)
 Omni Trio, [91](#)
 One Nation, [277](#), [285](#)
 Optical, [4](#), [95–97](#), [174](#), [231](#), [244](#),
 [291](#), [302](#), [363](#)
 Optiv, [291](#)
 Orbital, [141](#)
 Oscar ???, [177](#), [178](#)
 Otis ???, [325](#)
 Outlook (festival), [216](#)
 Outrage, [xii](#)
 Overload (event), [282](#)
 Overlook, [291](#)
 Ozzie's Crew, [56](#)

Pablo Escobar, [124](#)
 Papa Levi, [61](#)
 Parallel Forces, [38](#)
 Park Club, [118](#)
 Party À La Mazon, [127](#)
 Pascal, [91](#)
 Patrick Williams, [260](#), [288](#)
 Paul Brown, [136](#)
 Paul Chambers, [197](#)
 Paul Chue, [241](#), [243](#)
 Paul Hartnoll, [141](#)
 Paul Ibiza, [xviii](#), [88](#), [89](#)
 Paul Mariner, [15](#)
 Paul Oakenfold, [120](#)
 Paul Roast (Paul Sidell), [91](#)
 Paul Rooney, [277](#)
 Paul Trouble Anderson, [118](#),
 [120](#)
 PC Mistri (Sound System), [267](#)
 PDC (gang), [315](#)
 Pendulum, [147](#), [250](#), [288](#), [291](#)
 People's Club, [61](#), [80](#)
 Perception (event), [115](#), [122](#)
 Peshay, [297](#), [301](#), [302](#)
 Phaze 3, [136](#)
 Phil Hartnoll, [141](#)
 Phil Wells, [187](#)
 Philip Levi, [61](#)
 Philip Sallon, [60](#)
 Philly Blunt Records, [183](#)
 Philth, [292](#)
 Phobia, [111](#)
 Pish Posh, [372](#)
 PLO, [292](#)
 Poppin Wizards, [56](#), [57](#)
 Porky's Mastering, [361](#)
 Portsmouth (shop), [62](#)
 Potential Bad Boy, [88](#)
 Primark (shop), [62](#)
 Primary Talent, [151](#), [253](#), [254](#)
 Problem Central, [282](#)
 Production House, [88](#)
 Protean Productions, [362](#)
 Prototype Recordings, [360](#)
 Public Enemy, [121](#)
 Pulse FM, [99](#)
 Pure Bliss Records, [139](#)
 Pure Science, [277](#)
 Quadrant, [291](#)

Quarmz n Quarrelz, [292](#)
 Queens Park Rangers F.C., [15](#)

 R Notorious J, [371](#)
 R&S Records, [134](#)
 Rachel Hislock, [362](#)
 Rainer Bonhof, [15](#)
 RAM Records, [4](#), [223](#), [270](#), [272](#),
 [331](#), [360](#)
 Ramaaz, [348](#)
 Ramaaz ???, [72](#), [73](#), [191](#), [289](#)
 Randall, [xviii](#), [153](#), [166](#), [250](#),
 [301](#), [304](#)
 Rapattack, [58](#), [80](#)
 Rawkus, [367](#), [368](#), [370–372](#), [374](#)
 Rawkuts, [371](#), [372](#)
 Ray Keith, [xviii](#), [90](#), [249](#), [278](#),
 [279](#), [304](#), [326](#), [336](#)
 Razor, [291](#)
 RCA, [372](#)
 Real Madrid, [249](#)
 Rebel MC, [xviii](#), [80](#), [89](#), [132](#), [257](#)
 Reckless Records, [59](#)
 Red Ant, [99](#), [168](#)
 Red Lebanon, [292](#)
 Red Records (Shop), [59](#)
 Refuge Audio, [215](#)
 Reinforced Records, [xviii](#), [3](#),
 [127](#), [301](#)
 Remarc, [99](#)
 Remidy, [291](#)
 Renaat Vandepapeliere, [135](#)
 Renegade, [326](#)
 Renk Records, [90](#)
 Reprise Agency, [254](#)
 Retox, [295](#)
 Rhymetyme, [292](#)
 Rinse FM, [192](#)
 Roast, [91](#), [92](#)
 Rob Acteson, [118](#)
 Rob Rodgers, [230–233](#), [237](#), [239](#)
 Robert Stapes???, [288](#)
 Robyn Chaos, [225](#), [226](#), [292](#)
 Robyn Scharaga, [258](#)
 Rochelle ???, [192](#)
 Rock City Crew, [57](#)
 Rockwell, [179](#), [180](#)
 Rodney P, [61](#)
 Roller Express, [88](#)
 Ron Tom, [79](#)

Sidwalk & Micron, [56](#)
 Silent Witness, [254](#)
 Simon Bassline Smith, [250](#)
 Simon Davey, [361](#)
 Simon Goffe, [81](#)
 Simon Mortlock, [224–226](#), [234](#),
 [348](#)
 Simon Reynolds, [97](#)
 Sir Menelik, [371](#)
 Skibadee, [xiv](#), [183](#), [275](#), [281](#)
 Skitty, [291](#)
 Skream, [256](#)
 Skyz, [291](#)
 Slammin Vinyl, [277](#), [285](#)
 Sleeping Bag Records, [3](#)
 Slipmatt, [244](#)
 Smurf, [99](#)
 So Solid Crew, [142](#)
 Social Security, [292](#)
 Solid State, [136](#)
 Sonia Paulton, [127](#)
 Soul II Soul, [61](#), [268](#)
 Soundclash (event), [347](#)
 Soundclash (Party), [xiv](#)
 Sounia, [291](#)
 SOUR, [95](#), [293](#)
 SP MC, [171](#), [172](#), [287](#), [288](#)
 Spats (club), [57](#)
 Spectrasoul, [255](#)
 Speed, [134](#), [135](#), [221](#)
 Spindall, [291](#)
 Spirit, [292](#)
 Spor, [291](#)
 Squif, [292](#)
 SRD, [xiii](#), [187](#), [253](#), [305](#)
 Stakka & Skynet, [96](#)
 Stan Bowles, [16](#)
 Stapelton, [291](#), [292](#)
 Staunch, [292](#)
 Stealth, [292](#)
 Steve Austin (fictional
 character), [187](#)
 Steve Jackson, [88](#)
 Steve Jervier, [81](#)
 Steve Kielty, [181](#)
 Steve Walsh, [57](#)
 Stevie Hyper D, [304](#)
 Stewart Procter, [171](#), [172](#)
 Stone Roses, [122](#)
 Storm, [291](#), [294](#), [297](#)

Stretch, [291](#)
 Studio 2, [91](#)
 Sub Focus, [288](#)
 Subterania, [51](#)
 Subterra, [292](#)
 Sugar Ray Leonard, [35](#)
 Sun n Bass, [175](#)
 Survival, [181](#)
 Sway (rapper), [218](#)
 Sweetpea, [291](#)
 Swerve, [xiii](#), [163](#), [170](#), [217](#), [322](#)
 Swift, [250](#)
 Symptom, [292](#)
 System, [216](#), [360](#)

 Talib Kweli, [368](#)
 Tango & Ratty, [88](#)
 Tania Lee, [248](#), [258](#)
 Tanna (Of 031 U.K. Bloods), [315](#)
 Tasco Warehouse (rave), [153](#)
 Task Force, [62](#)
 Technical Itch, [96](#), [292](#)
 Technology (event), [177](#)
 Teebee, [67](#), [68](#), [255](#), [259](#)
 Teknola, [292](#)

 Telepathy, [303](#), [304](#)
 Temple Records, [373](#)
 Terence Trent D'Arby, [19](#)
 Terminal State & Zero Zero, [291](#)
 Terry Tee, [89](#)
 Terry Turbo, [277](#)
 The Architex, [217](#)
 The Big Rewind, [274](#)
 The Brain (club), [130](#)
 The Burner Brothers, [372](#)
 The Centre (club), [57](#)
 The Cookie Crew, [62](#)
 The End, [111](#), [136](#), [142](#), [154](#),
 [163](#), [171](#), [224](#), [227](#), [235](#),
 [258](#), [260](#), [268–274](#), [288](#),
 [294](#), [298](#), [312](#), [327](#), [347](#),
 [348](#)
 The Exchange, [361](#)
 The Institute (venue), [93](#)
 The Prototypes, [254](#)
 The Ragga Twins, [93](#)
 The Risky, [167](#)
 The Sindecut, [58](#)
 Thijs De Vlieger, [295](#)

Thomas Green, [179](#)
 Thunder and Joy, [92](#)
 Thunder Ridge (Sound System),
 [269](#)
 Tiesto, [152](#)
 Tim Simenon, [60](#), [61](#), [118](#)
 Tim Westwood, [61](#), [79](#), [81](#), [268](#)
 Tinie Tempah, [218](#)
 Tippa Irie, [61](#)
 TK Dramatic, [131](#)
 TMG, [259](#)
 Toby Bailey, [230](#), [362](#)
 Todd Terry, [120](#)
 Tom Schroeder, [255](#), [256](#)
 Tommy Robinson (activist), [77](#)
 Tones and Amber, [xiv](#)
 Tony Colman, [170](#), [172](#), [173](#)
 Tony Damage, [348](#)
 Total Science, [xiii](#)
 Tottenham Mandem, [315](#)
 Touch, [96](#)
 Tracey Ton, [248](#)
 Tracksuit Mafia, [292](#)
 Trevor Farrell, [128](#), [130](#)
 Trevor Nelson, [268](#)
 Trilo, [292](#)
 Triple Sickz, [292](#)
 Tristan Teraform, [292](#)
 Trouble, [291](#)
 Troy Bonney, [299](#)
 True Playaz, [360](#)
 UK Apachi, [91](#)
 Ultra Music Festival, [293](#)
 UMC, [248](#), [258](#)
 Uncle Dugs, [169](#), [192](#)
 Underground Resistance, [135](#)
 Unique Artists, [147](#), [249](#), [250](#)
 Unity Records (shop), [59](#), [132](#)
 Universal Project, [158](#), [216](#),
 [224](#), [227](#), [292](#), [348](#)
 Unknown Error, [292](#)
 Usain Bolt, [33](#)
 Usual Suspects, [xiv](#), [4](#), [5](#), [97](#),
 [141](#), [158](#), [213](#), [214](#), [224](#),
 [225](#), [230](#), [234](#), [336](#), [344](#)
 V Recordings, [97](#), [183](#), [243](#), [269](#)
 Valve, [5](#), [70](#), [315](#)
 Vanessa Simon, [131](#)
 Vegas, [133](#)

Verb, [142](#), [291](#), [348](#)
 Vicious Circle, [111](#), [174](#), [216](#),
 [224](#), [225](#), [234](#), [255](#), [292](#),
 [344](#), [360](#)
 Vikas ???, [362](#)
 Vince Hilaire, [15](#)
 Vince Medley, [293](#)
 Vinyl Distribution, [187](#), [305](#)
 Vinyl Syndicate Recordings, [xi](#),
 [xii](#)
 Violence Recordings, [142](#)
 Virus Recordings, [4](#), [95–97](#), [270](#),
 [303](#), [331](#), [360](#)
 Volatile Cycle, [292](#)
 Voytek, [291](#)
 Wag Club, [60](#), [61](#), [118](#), [268](#)
 Warning (rave), [281](#)
 Wax Club, [303–305](#)
 Way Back When, [274](#)
 Wayne Roast, [91](#)
 Weekend Rush, [99](#), [168](#)
 West Ham United F.C., [119](#)
 Will Kennard, [212](#), [222](#), [223](#)
 Winter Music Conference, [150](#),
 [238](#), [331](#)
 Wolverhampton Wanderers
 F.C, [15](#)
 Wookie, [241](#)
 World Dance (rave), [122](#)
 Wyld Pitch, [59](#), [370](#)
 XL Recordings, [88](#)
 XTM, [291](#)
 Yoko Speechley, [3](#), [63–65](#), [72](#),
 [113](#), [114](#), [162](#), [175](#), [214](#),
 [254](#), [261](#), [294](#), [308](#), [317](#),
 [348](#), [374](#)
 Young Lion, [61](#), [241](#)
 Younghead, [92](#)
 Zaks Records (shop), [81](#)
 Zen, [142](#)
 Zootweaver, [292](#)

Info

Hi there... I can imagine Clayton being really angry about this right now, maybe claiming that some “keyboard warrior in his mum’s basement” stole his book and put it up on the internet and that he is losing money on this, but i will try to explain why i did this and what this really is.

In the last five years, a lot of people inside the Drum & Bass scene have released their biographies or general books about the history of DnB. People like Jumping Jack Frost, DJ Rap or MC Flux all released book via reputable publishing houses and backed by professionals who helped them out writing those books. They vary in quality, but generally they are well edited and printed to regular standard, which is not the norm in uncertain times (of publishing) in 2020. The books Velocity Press, led by former K-Mag publisher Colin Steven, releases are a great example of good choice and interesting topics touching the history and state of the scene. (e.g. Flyer design, the fantastic “Join the Future” book) Not forgetting the all-time classic and benchmark “All Crews”.

Claytons announcement (In November 2018), that he also wrote

an autobiography and history on one of the most important labels in Drum & Bass from the end of the last century through the noughties to 2010s was particularly met with a lot of interest ranging from reverence to outright ridicule. No wonder when one of the most infamous characters of the scene wants to tell his story, everyone is pricking up ears to see if all the rumours and stories about missed payments, scuffles and threats are true, or at least to see who Clayton tries to frame all these points.

People got more and more upset when on the release date of the book (on 08.02.2019) a lot of people started to get nervous... Or in case of you loathing Clayton, your prediction that the book might never materialize, was confirmed. The joke was made from the beginning.³

As i was researching some of the claims of the book, i came across the reason, why the book eventually came out way to late. Clayton, which some people still claim to be a scammer himself, was conned by a fake publishing company, which took some of the money but never did anything in terms of printing the book. In the end he managed to print up at least some copies through a different company, but way later then originally planned. I don't know how many received their books in the end, but looking at the comments on the internet, not many. A lot of people were angry, considering the unusually high pre-order price of 30 or 40 pounds (not common for paperbacks, especially by authors who haven't release anything before), which

³<https://www.dogsonacid.com/threads/renegade-loved-by-few-hated-by-many-respected-by-all.796902/>, "What are the chances out of 10 of actually receiving this?"

of course reinforced their view on Clayton being a scam.

Additionally to that, a leaked copy of the draft popped up online a few months before the release, which garnered interest, as they were shared on the DoA and DnBArena forums, but i guess these were actually a lot of those who ordered and have NOT received a copy were at least compensated by a lesser quality version of the book. Clayton did not seem very happy about the leak online (and tried to claim that the leaker was identified, because the “editor” watermarked the draft (=Left out things intentionally to identify who got what copy). I highly doubt that claim...). He changed his mind as he saw that the leak was actually beneficial to generating hype for the book and himself.

I never got my copy and didn't want spoil the fun by reading an complete unfinished draft on the internet. I know how different a draft can look like the finished product. Somehow i got access to a physical copy of the book through a friend and to be frank i was quite shocked that the finished product was actually not far off the excerpts people posted from the draft. A lot of promises on the book were made by Clayton (allegedly Brian Belle-Fortune was helping writing parts of the book, a “word-chick” (a quit derogatory term, imho) was constantly checking the draft) but reading through the book was tiresome and quite hard, especially if you like reading books. I'm not saying books should be perfect and error-free, on the contrary. But constant misuse of the oxford comma or the lack of commas in long sentences (which sometimes changed the sentence

completely), the inconsistent use of quotation marks and additionally a jumbled structure of the book were more the sign of a hectic and pressured release. I also assume that Clayton and his editor were constantly arguing about things and, considering Clayton can be hard-headed, changes were simply negated, the finished book was the worst of all the books mentioned above. On top of that it was a cheap glue binding, which is done by a lot of print-on-demand services. Another clue, that this book was not really professionally supervised, was the lack of any identifiers (= ISBN number), which makes it hard for anyone acquiring the book for research purposes and, more shocking, archiving.

All these things are disappointing, especially considering the fact, that the book HAS some interesting points and sheds a lot of light onto some things and events. Historical research is a very broad and hard profession. Written words are sometimes our only source for things, especially for smaller cultural niches and fringe groups. Biographies never portray the real truth (even though Clayton always claimed on the interviews on the book to write “What really happened...”), but are still important tools to at least approximate the truth and to understand why people act, like they do. Of course no one admits to be a “bad person” or to have hurt people. We all rationalize our actions and words... otherwise we would not be able to get through our lives. A objective view of some things is still possible by approximating and collecting of information and biographies are an important tool to get to a bigger picture of events and developments. Clayton’s book

does give some of these clues and it IS important for the Drum & Bass scene, especially because Renegade Hardware shaped the path a sub-genre (Techstep and Neuro) of DnB like no other label. If researchers in the future want to understand cultural fringes, they depend on sources like biographies and magazine articles.

I found it very disappointing that the chance to portray our scene in a better light was again toppled by unprofessional choices by Clayton. The way everything was communicated, the way things ended up were unsatisfying, at least for me. I'm in no way a professional editor, but i thought i could at least help out making the book a bit better by applying the things i learnt writing books and articles for magazines and newspapers. Also bear in mind, that I am not a native English speaker. The document you are reading right now is still miles away from a great biography.

But at least i tried to make it a more readable by changing small things. I used the leaked draft as the body for the book and tried to maintain its original structure and content. I edited out the wrong quotation marks, serial commas and changed sentences to clarify things. I did not delete any content, only changed the wording for small portions and added punctuations for an "optimized" reading flow. I also marked the original pages of the published book.

During my research i also was able to add a lot of footnotes to the draft, which i originally did not intend to add to the finished revision. It is an added bonus to the original book. (I also want to point out that i added mostly Discogs and Wikipedia links, as they are less

susceptible to digital decay, or to be more precise are descriptive by the URL themselves. I sometimes had to resort to other sources, which, I hope, will not vanish from the internet so soon). I was also a bit disappointed to not see an Index, which i conveniently added to this document. (I tried to identify most of the persons mentioned! I did not find out the real names of half a dozen and of course i omitted indexing names only mentioned once and that are of not public interest, like his sister or aunt) If you would like to call it like that, this is an enhanced research revision of “Renegade”.

I initially wanted to add a few more Appendices with screenshots of more quotes from Clayton’s Facebook page or the hijacked jerkme-crazy Instagram account. Especially the hacked Instagram account is problematic to include in the book, as it would’ve tainted the purpose this revision completely. Do not be fooled. I believe the claims on there. A lot of circumstantial evidence backs up these claims. (Withholding 13.000 pounds in July 2019, independent accounts of not paying (highly revered!) artists, etc.) But ultimately i wanted to give other people the chance to get the picture for themselves and most importantly to give them a broader picture to the mind of Clayton Hines through direct links to quotes from his FB page, etc.

I highly doubt we will see a second, revised edition of the book, thus i put this up on the internet for free, but with a few limitations. You can not print or copy things from this PDF (unless you know, what you are doing). However i will put up the \LaTeX version of this (sans this chapter and the appendix) on some Pastebin, which will

be added to the end of this chapter.

If Clayton is really interested releasing an E-Book version of his biography, he can do it in less than 30 seconds or at least pass it on to some professional editor or printing house (which will know how to use T_EX files!.

I would've loved to put this up on Github. A crowd-revised version would've been much easier, but the danger that Clayton tries to pull it is way to high. It is easier for me to drop it on some TOR related text site, than to get sued for a free-time project.

Also a note for Clayton: If you are hurt by someone copying your book, I'd would recommend you to read John Milton's [Areopagitica](#).

Text source: <https://zerobin.net/?8c23e6f6bfac1475#9bnFPJpi03wyqPOPEKA5rmGk+/bSTgoRJl62dLZIALY=>